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# MONSELL DIGBY.

A Novel,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

W. MARSHALL.

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VOL. II.

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# MONSELL DIGBY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### IN HIDING.

WHEN Mr. Digby returned to Middlewood it was nearly noontide. The roads were filled with excited people, who delayed him much by their importunate questions. The merely curious he had no great difficulty in shaking off, but the anxious fathers and mothers, the frenzied wives, sisters, and sweethearts had a deeper claim on his pity and consideration. He found that every word which he uttered carried comfort, for it dissipated some delusion.

The public imagination was rioting in the awful splendour or horror of wholesale destruction. Hundreds had been killed. Captives in scores had been sabred by the military—the hateful soldiers and their bloodthirsty

officers. The villagers had been barbarous, had been heroic, had been half exterminated. Chadwick Fold was at that moment nothing but a few charred embers. The mill and dye house walls, black, gaunt, and smouldering, might alone be seen. The heroes, bold Tom and sanctimonious psalm-singing Andrew, had covered themselves with infamy, with honour, by the numbers they had shot, &c., &c. With such vivid anticipations the curiosity-mongers looked on the village with a sense of disappointment when they saw it standing, the sentry lounging quietly at his post, and his comrades whistling coolly some favourite tune, as divested of coat and helmet a portion of them rubbed down their horses in the open street. At Middlewood all was panic—shops were shut up, the mills had closed, the silk weavers had taken holiday, the private dwellings were empty, all had pushed on to Chadwick Fold.

The Misses Spinks and Mr. Evans were in quite a state of alarm. They had given Monsell up as quite lost ; for they paid him the silent compliment of believing that what he went to do he would not leave undone. Miss Ophelia

seized his hand with effusion. Miss Violetta looked quite pleased to see him safe back from "that horrid carnage."

It was a generation that had been long accustomed to great slaughters and tremendous battles ; but, somehow, the little bit of a skirmish in the vicinity had come upon them with the appalling gloom and terror which a Borodina or a Waterloo had failed to produce. And, consequently, the trio received Mr. Digby as one come back from dreadful slaughters with the bays of a hero about his brow. There was too much true manhood in Monsell Digby to allow such nonsense, or to riot in fallacious heroics for a moment.

He quickly made them understand how little danger he had had to encounter, and how much protection was at his service from soldier and villager, if he had needed any at all. But the little ladies were not much consoled when they heard that life had been sacrificed, and dying men were still in the Fold.

"Oh," said Violetta, kissing Ophelia, "it might have been one of us, and then—"

The sense of such loneliness seemed to recall to the poor spinsters the comfort which they had in each other, and to lift them above the querulousness which sometimes dimmed their lives.

When Mr. Digby had made his report to them about the two girls, and assured them over and over that they were good girls, they seemed to glance at each other with a meaning look of satisfaction, and immediately after, as if their mission was fulfilled, announced that they must leave on their journey homewards.

“Will you not stay a day or two?” said hospitable Mr. Evans. “Mr. Digby says that the officer, Captain Butler, is a friend of his, and comes from your part of the country, and will dine with him, or rather, if he will allow it, with us to-morrow evening here.”

“No, they knew Captain Butler’s family very well, but they must go home.”

And so it was done, the old ladies seeming to have a general undefined notion that, with the exception of the two clergymen, they had wandered unwillingly into a kingdom of cannibals.

The great grand carriage sailed very

quietly and unobserved out of the town that day at one o'clock, for Middlewood had emptied itself into Chadwick Fold. Mr. Digby asked permission to accompany them a little distance on the way for fear they might meet any crowds. It was astonishing with what alacrity the coachman drove out of the little town. Visions of softer beds and daintier meals were doubtless garnished with assurances of a whole skin, a thing not very certain in Middlewood in Peter's opinion; and he took care that these quick flitting dreams of delight should have a response in the horses' legs. There was the prospect of a very long walk when Mr. Digby got out, and wished them good-bye.

"You will call and see us, when you come into our neighbourhood, Mr. Digby. Will you kindly accept that for your school scheme at Chadwick Fold?" It was a folded parcel of notes.

And so they parted with mutual esteem, for the better side of the old ladies' character—they had but one—had insensibly revealed itself in the charities they assisted; and the little gift of a hundred pounds offered in a

simple matter-of-fact way towards beginning his Mission Chapel was a delicate manner of showing how they appreciated the service which he had rendered to them.

He walked stoutly homewards through Rochdale, on by Tandle Hill, and over moors that are now the hives of busy blackened industry, with inky streams and murky atmosphere, but then fresh with the unadulterated breath of blossom and wild flower, and lightened up with the flash of crystal brooks, and the racing shadows of fleecy clouds on the broad breasts of the wavy downs and wastes. Everywhere there was an unwonted stir of human life. Men were wondering, talking, whispering, and moving ever. Shadows moving in the sweet afternoon sunlight were to be seen on the paths and on the wayless open moors all wending to one quarter by the shorter route.

It was as if the wind were passing over a sea, curling its waters into foaming crests, and every crest following its fellow to one goal. Digby heeded it not, but hurried homewards avoiding every occasion of talking about the catastrophe. He was push-

ing steadily on to Middlewood when he heard a tax cart behind. It was the leading butcher of the little town who invited him to ride with him ; an invitation that was not to be despised after a long walk on a hot summer's day, with a long walk still before him. But it soon appeared that the worthy man had other motives for his kindness. After a round trot of a couple of miles when the moving dots of humanity thinned off, drifting over the hills to their left rear, he said—

“ Mr. Digby, you see that smoke just appearing over the little hill there.”

“ Yes.”

“ Well, sir, we all know that, disapproving as you did of the conduct of those men this morning at Chadwick Fold, you still pity their folly, and you certainly will not inform against them. There is a man lying there very badly hurt, and I should be glad if you could speak a word to him. If I drive you to that great stone there, will you make your way to the wounded man ? He is shot through the shoulder, and, without medical assistance, may die. Say, R. Green, the butcher, asked you to call.”



“ Well, it is dangerous work comforting rebels ; but as I had some hospital practice once, and can do a little for body as well as soul, I, perhaps, ought to go.”

The butcher seemed particularly thankful, and Monsell began to suspect that their meeting was not quite as accidental as it had appeared.

The house was a little moorland holding, having a small pond close in front for the ducks and geese, an unwholesome propinquity to the farm dungheap behind, and possessing in rear an old ramshackle barn and cowshed. The sheep dog soon made his advent known, and something less soothing in the form of a growling mastiff lingered behind. A man appeared with a look which at once was apprehensive and hostile.

“ What’n yo’ wanting yer ? ” he exclaimed with a scowling look from under the brim of his broad straw hat.

“ To do a good turn, my man. Richard Green, the butcher, has just put me down at the big stone, and asked me to look in.”

The man’s countenance changed. Giving a quick look around he motioned him to

follow. They entered the house; it had a stern stone floor, walls bare of ornament save the brown clay-like wash, with a fire burning on the ground under a chimney so vast that two or three persons might sit round the ingle within it. A middle-aged woman in a dirty duffel dress was busy preparing a meal, but she gave no greeting save a suspicious look out of the corner of her eye as she went on stirring with a wooden spoon the liquid boiling in the pan.

“What’n they caw yo’?” said the man, abruptly.

“Monsell Digby, curate of Middlewood.”

The man’s countenance was shaded with disappointment. He would have preferred a surgeon.

“We’n wanting n’ parson fellies yer. If yo’n had been a doctor neaw, we’n gotten someb’dy badly, an’ yo’ might ha’ helped.”

“Well, my friend, I’m more of that than I look. Let us see the patient.”

The man hesitated as if puzzled. Digby saw his difficulty.

“I mean,” he said, “th’ feller, or wench, that’s badly.”

The man looked reassured. The old woman turned round with a kindlier countenance, and came up to him with a scrutinising look, which gazed deep into his eyes with no tinge of impertinence about it, but with very much earnest solicitude. This woman, thought Monsell to himself, has much at stake. She looks as if she has had recent trouble.

"Yo look a kindly gentleman," she said, with less of the *patois* than her husband, "and yo wouldna bring trouble on poor folk that have had trouble enough already?"

Monsell nodded in a friendly way.

"Luke, yo may tell all," she said, taking her pleading, searching glance off his face, and going to the pan on the fire to stir it with greater earnestness.

The man briefly told him that his son had got injured that morning at Chadwick Fold, had lost very much blood in crossing the hills, and that the two companions who had never deserted him, even when chased by some horse soldiers, were in hiding with him. Monsell bade him lose no time in taking him to his son. He led him through the back door towards the old barn. After a careful

scrutiny to see if any Paul Pry was about, they entered the building, on the floor of which lay a quantity of hay. There was a second floor, but he did not seem as if he were about to mount the ladder. When the door was closed, Monsell noticed they were in absolute darkness, so carefully had every chink which could let light in and out been stopped up. Lighting a candle, the man proceeded to lift aside the hay and litter which covered a portion of the floor. While this was being done Monsell could scarcely understand his purpose. The floor seemed quite intact. But when a short plank had been lifted, then he saw that there was a secret place below which became more evident when two other short planks had been raised and a ladder drawn up by which they were to descend. A whispered word of re-assurance was all that Monsell heard to make him aware that any human being was there; so dark did it seem, and so carefully did the inmates screen themselves until bidden to appear. The man descended motioning Digby to follow. He found himself in a kind of cavern of small size, and which had evidently

been dug after the barn had been built. It was simply a hole dug in the earth, some ten feet long by eight broad. The rushlight seemed only to light the centre in which they stood, leaving deep shadows in the corners, which made it difficult for some time to see clearly what was there. Some vessels were lying about, the purpose of which he could not understand, and two pairs of eyes seemed to take the light in the recess farthest from him.

“Come yer, lads. It’s a friend.”

Two young men stepped forward, and one of them quailed, but Digby could not recall who he was. They looked weird and dirty, but desperate, like men determined to die at bay.

“Let us attend to the sick man,” he said. “Is he here?” and he moved to a corner where his eyes getting accommodated to the dim light, had noticed something dark on a pallet of straw and a blanket.

It was a young man with reddish hair, a broad strong countenance, and the dress and appearance of the moorland farming class.

“It’s a friend, Mark, thee uncle has sent,” said the man.

The young man turned up his face with a look in which forlornness, pain, and suspicion, all combined to infuse a light into those eyes which it was painful to observe. Monsell's voice assumed a tone of almost womanly tenderness, as he bent over him and inquired where he was injured. There was a less fierce suspicious light in the young man's glance, as he groaned and pointed to his shirt covered with blood near the left shoulder. Digby gently lifted up the shirt, but could not see clearly. "I must have some more light." The two men at once produced a candle which they had put out directly they heard feet above their hiding place. He found the shirt sticking to the wound. Pulling out the little case of lint and simple surgical instruments, which he had put into his pocket in the early morning, he cut away the shirt, and found some large pellets underneath the clotted blood. Removing as many of these as he could easily probe, he then bound up the wound, having noticed that no vital part had been touched, and, telling him that he would soon be better if no dangerous complications arose, he gave some directions about

his food. He turned to the other two, who had bent over him with curiosity and interest while dressing the hurt.

“Are either of you lads injured?”

They would scarcely acknowledge that they were.

“It will not go so well for you while you are here if they are neglected. So let me see them.”

“Come, lads, th’ parson wants to be koind t’ yo?” said the father.

They had got several cuts and lacerations which the Curate carefully dressed and bound up.

“Now,” he said, “I must go. But you know, friends, I am a parson as well as a doctor, and I must be a parson. I want you to kneel down with me, and I’ll make a little prayer for our friend there and ourselves.”

The men looked shy and shame-faced.

“If it’s all th’ same to yo, sir, I’d rather not,” said one of the young men.

“No! I must do it, and it will do you no harm,” and he knelt promptly down.

The two young men slowly followed his example. The father hesitated.

"Come, friend," said Digby, kneeling on the dirty ground and looking up.

"Deng it aw will," said the man, with a queer twist of his shoulders as he did so.

Then Digby pleaded for forgiveness for their sins, for grace that they might be kept safe from harm in the future, for mercy that would give them back to their friends, for a speedy restoration of the wounded man and his old health, for quiet and peace to the land, and long prosperous lives in quiet happy homes to all present when the time of the present trial was passed.

The men looked subdued, but calmer and more contented, as they generally do under such circumstances, and the lad held his free right hand up to shake Digby's as he turned to go.

"Yo'll not play owt to nobb'dy," said one of the young men.

"I promise you that, if you'll promise me that you'll not get into fresh mischief."

This pledge was readily given by both of them as they insisted at parting on shaking hands—a mark of cordiality rather than familiarity which the Lancashire peasant and



operative often insists upon, no matter how great the discrepancy of rank betwixt him and his benefactor.

"Yo'll come another toime, wonna yo?" said the former pleadingly.

"Well, my friend, this is not my kind of work, and you ought to have a regular doctor."

"Aye, but we conna ha' one. Just promise to come i' th' morning sometoime, an' we'n be on th' look out for yo."

Digby was obliged to promise, and then turned to ascend the ladder.

"If yo see Mrs. Greenhalgh, of Heydale, sir, will yo say Willy's safe?"

"An' if yo see Alf Swires an' Maggie Meller, will yo say Tom's aw' reet?"

Monsell promised, and speaking one last kind word to the wounded man, ascended the ladder after the farmer.

There was keen listening by the latter when they had got to the barn floor again. He seemed as if standing still there he could hear something outside. His ears seemed as if they had an action of their own. Monsell could have sworn that he saw them move backwards and forwards like a dog's.

"Noo, there's nobb'dy," he muttered to himself, and began to rearrange the planks, hay, and straw just as they had found them. He insisted then upon going out to see if anybody was looking about, leaving Digby in the dark, and, after scouring the land and little hills around with his dogs, returned and motioned the Curate back to the house.

As they entered the old woman, who had evidently heard a favourable account, came forward and offered her hand, asking him to take something to drink. The man had gone to a stone jar and was pouring out a spirit of some kind or other into a glass when he seemed to check himself, saying, in an undertone—

"No, it's noan reet to offer *him* 't."

He poured it back, replaced the jar, and came and asked if Ailey might get him "summut to drink. They'd rare good milk."

Digby had been scanning all this with great interest, thinking that he saw returning conscience in a part of it, and wondering what was the wrong-doing in which the family was engaged. He was destined to know that clear enough afterwards.


## CHAPTER II.

### PAST AND PRESENT.

NEXT morning as he was making his way early across the moors, he came to the junction of two paths, where Nature, in one of her gigantic freaks, seemed to have been "making castles" of great boulders, as children do with their marbles. Something seemed to stir as he was turning off to his right to visit Blacken Farm. It was an old woman in her weather-stained, red cloak cowering out of sight amongst the great stones.

"Maisther Digby, dunno yo goo to th' farm. Sowlgers ha' been, an' they hanna gone yet. Goo on as if yo were goeing to Rachdy, an' come back in hafe an heaur, an' aw'll be at th' rindle up yond to warn yo."

He went on. The moorland air was like atmospheric wine. The sky was as silver, the welkin as gold; the two mingled into a vision of amber blanced, which seemed like a poet's dream of the ethereal. He



lay down on the thick spring heather, a bunch of large fronded fern lapping his face, and he gazed at the virgin-white clouds flitting in the heavens, and throwing their darker shadows on the long heave of land in front, curving away to right and left. It is the emblem of many a life. Dreams, aspirations pure as virgin snow in the mind, dimmed and darkened by the earth they touch and intended to bless. He viewed his past life, and the bright hopes with which ten years before he began his clerical career. It looked like failure as a profession—a curate still, and likely to be. He cared little for that. “Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor yet from the south.” And the north wind seemed too harsh to bring him such an exotic. He had seen men poor in brain, in purpose, in character, beneficed, aye, and enriched before him. It mattered not. He would not sour life with regrets for this. He cared more about that failure of his high hopes of man and for man, which seemed at this moment to be clothed in ridicule by the very parties themselves for whom they were formed. Should

he live to see any amelioration of this curtailed manhood ; any softening of those hard, cruel pleasures ; any lessening of these long hours of moiling labour ; any loosening of these black bonds of ignorance ? He had spent some years in easier parts of the Master's vineyard than this, and some in, perhaps, harder ; but here was the place for his work, and here he would endeavour to do it, whatever failure might seem to come. He would still trust and try to lift up this people near to that ideal of Christian citizenship which was the loadstar of his life, where justice and mercy broadened ever like an overflowing river, and man indexed the years by his social and moral progress.

He rose strengthened and stimulated like one who had been in converse with the fresh spirit of Nature, eternal in its youth, and had brought away the deathless bloom-tinge on his soul. He had passed on to the errand of the hour, his spirit wind-borne in its lightness, and sun-toned in its hope, and his heart set on gathering a harvest of good out of the disasters around. As he stood in that wretched hole scooped out,

he believed, for illegal purposes—the rushlight in the dense darkness making them seem to each other but as the spectres of men in some abode of the lost—he determined to begin with the first step of a more resolute march forward. Having found his patients better, no bad symptoms supervening as yet, and having redressed their wounds, he appealed to these four men as their friend to listen to him. They were, in truth, in a listening mood, failure, helplessness and a sense of his services and goodwill all predisposing to a reasonable frame of mind. He pointed out to them how impossible it was to defy a strong Government, how suffering and failure are the immediate result, how delay in getting what might be got early, the certain result, and loss on every side—loss of friends, of sympathy, of all that support which comes from a respect for their motives and the reasonableness of their conduct—the continual result.

“ Promise me, now, my friends, that when this is all blown over, and you are safe back at your homes and your work, you will not join in any violence again, but, on the con-

trary, will help myself and other worthier men to get peaceably what you ought to have, and what you can get no other way."

They gave the pledge willingly enough, and, after reminding them that they must be very cautious until they could get away into quieter districts while the storm blew over, he left them in their dreary abode.

As they sat over their wine that evening after dinner, Butler and Digby talked in the old college strain, when Mrs. Digby had withdrawn.

"I'm sorry you did not bring Chetwynd with you."

"Well, he pretended that duty might require his presence. I suspect that the trim figure, well turned ankle, and sweet face of Miss Mary Meller has something to do with it. But, in truth, there was enough to do yesterday and the early part of to-day."

"Indeed! I heard of no fresh disturbance."

"No, there was no disturbance, unless people crowding each other across the Styx is a disturbance. Yesterday evening the people got that wedged together in the village that they could not move. We all got

frightened lest they should leave us a holocaust of trampled bodies. I was obliged to form the men two deep across the road outside each end of the village and prevent any more coming in, and then set my fellows to drive out those that were in. After two hours' hard labour of this kind it became possible to dodge your way through the crowd. To-day has been better, and the jury were able to meet and inspect the bodies, mill, &c."

"A sad, sad business," ejaculated Digby.

"With a comical side to it, my boy. Two of my fellows followed a wounded man with two others yesterday morning over the moors, never losing sight of them for a considerable time. They both swear they saw the three go into a little cottage with a barn behind it, and they were only a quarter of an hour before they came up, never losing sight of the house, and yet the three men had utterly vanished. They've been this morning, and they cannot find the slightest trace of any hiding-place whatever. The corporal is one of my sharpest men, and he declares that there isn't a hole about the place into which



a rat could get that he's not explored, and yet they can't find the men."

"Well, you may expect that the natives will be their friends, and those who are strangers will think that they've had thrashing enough, and will scarcely like to inform."

"Poor wretches. I pity them with all my heart. But I wonder, Monsell, how it is you care to live amongst them?"

"Why, you see, Butler, in every place you live in there's a compensation and a drawback. The drawback here is the roughness, the discontent, and the turbulence. The compensation is that the folks have got warm hearts, big brains, and offer a fellow an opportunity of serving them and working out his principles at the same time."

"Ah! well. *Chacun à son goût*. But I had a letter this morning, Monsell, from my father, telling me that his old college chum, Mr. Chester, the Vicar, is, like himself, very shaky. He says that they came into their livings together, and he thinks they'll go out together. You know my father presented him when he came into possession of the estate. I fear there is some truth in both

statements. Promise me, Monsell, if the old Vicar should die, that you will accept the living, if it is in my gift?"

"Well, I must not bind myself to anything, for I don't know what lies before me here."

Butler looked surprised. But then he reflected Monsell was peculiar and not like other men.

"Will you allow it to remain an open question?"

Butler nodded assent, and they talked on.

"To-morrow is Sunday, Butler. Shall we make arrangements for seating any of your men?"

"Well, I will bring up some of them with pleasure, if we can spare any from duty. There will be less crowding to repress in the morning. Do you preach?"

"It is my turn."

"Ah! then you may expect me if there isn't a riot hereabouts, or a summons to one elsewhere. I shall like to hear the sound of your voice, Monsell, from a pulpit, whether I like your doctrine or not."

"Well, Butler, whether you like it or not, neither doctrine nor sermon will be cut and


squared on account of a visit from His Majesty's forces."

"There spake the whole of Monsell Digby."

"Good-night."

"I wonder," said Butler to himself, as he rode back to the Fold, "what new maggots Monsell has stowed away in that big brain of his since we last met? Funny; most men would have jumped at the offer of Tralecum-Grassham, with a snug vicarage, its clear seven hundred a year, and its bonny little village and scant population. And he won't! By George, he shall, though, if to-morrow doesn't prove that he's got a lot of impracticable notions that will make co-operation with him impossible. I hope he hasn't, for I begin to feel that I can't do without him, if I leave the service to go up to Klipham. It will be exile."

The Middlewood church-goers were earlier than usual in their seats next morning. There was a spirit of excitement, simmering here, effervescing there, combined with a gnashing of teeth elsewhere, which showed itself through the whole district—showed itself in all things private, and doubly in everything



public. Men could do nothing quietly. All old habits and accustomed ways were either discarded for the time, or else had a restless spirit infused into them which made them as if they were new. The people were naturally excited about the church service when several of those dreadful soldiers would be present. The village girls did not seem, by the way, less careful in donning their best bonnets on that account. Then it was Mr. Digby's turn to preach, the wonderful curate, the able curate, the outrageous curate, the radical curate, the mad curate, the excellent curate, &c., but; admitted by all, the courageous curate. Nobody believed that he would shun to declare unto them the whole counsel of God on the matter—as he understood it. Hence, expectation accelerated excitement, and nobody was the cooler for the fact that Monsell was to preach. Had it been Mr. Evans the effect might have been as cooling as the fire engine, save for the clattering presence of the red coats.

It is a far fuller church than usual that morning, and the score of cavalry men, with the bright sun glinting on button and

shoulder-plate, give an air of unwonted gaiety to the church. The voluntary rolls out. The beadle appears with mace on shoulder—it is an old aristocratic parish church—and Reader, Vicar and Curate in their white robes and scarlet hoods make their appearance. Yes, there is no mistake about it now. Mr. Evans goes to the reading-desk, and Mr. Digby will preach. The hush of quiet devotional feeling replaces the low whisperings of curious and excitable people, for these good, homely Middlewood folks have a clear notion what is due to their parish church, themselves, its clergy, and the Great One whom they have come to worship, when once the service actually begins. As Monsell enters the pulpit, preceded by the mace again, more than Captain Butler look up with an interested glance, while the Curate kneels and buries his face in his hands. At last, when the hymn is done, and the collect recited, a clear voice, in firm, well-detonated syllables, touches every wall and cranny of the building.

“I preach this morning a sermon I delivered elsewhere four months ago, under

different circumstances and to a very different class of people."

"There's sense there," said Butler to himself. "I'm glad he does not mean to say anything not well weighed at such a time as this."

On the other hand the villagers looked rather disappointed. They expected the unexpected; at any rate, a slashing, cutting discourse, with vivid descriptions of the last three days' work, and a moral tagged at the tail of it, and they were going to have what others had heard before. Shameful!

"1 Peter, chapter ii., verse 17: Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King."

"A loyal text," said Butler to himself; and then he half blushed as he remembered that all texts were loyal when men's minds were loyal to them.

"Reverence, honour, and love, are the three themes here; all really, like a plant in a seed, contained in the first one. Fear, reverence God, implies reverence man. Fear God implies cherish for Him a profound love which will, by its very nature, include a love,

for man, whom He once created in His own image. That love for man implies a natural courtesy; nay, more, a Christian consideration for him in your lightest and weightiest dealings. It implies a scrupulous consideration for his feelings; nay, even for his very oddities, as far as you can; a scrupulous regard for his rights; in short, a Christian *justice*, leavening all your transactions with your fellow citizen and subject. It brings before you the majesty of humanity, as such, and its grave responsibilities as regards itself and others. It says to every more fortunate Christian man, honour thy less fortunate brother, not as a condescension, for that is unchristian as well as impertinent; not as a petty trick to bring back on thyself as greater than him, a grander reflex of honour; for that is self-idolatry; but as a simple acknowledgment of the old truth, 'God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.' The rights of woman, the rights of man—these were chartered to them in the very moment of their creation, a grand applause from the highest intelligences and the

brightest orbs of heaven setting seal to the act, as 'the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.'


"And the essence of Christian fair-dealing with one another, Christian justice, is that all should help to get them and give back to every brother and sister those rights that have been wrenched away. The heart of humanity ever lies in an uneasy nightmare, out of harmony with itself and everything around, while it labours within the iron circle of a social or political injustice. Give men what the very murmurings of the ages in their blood tells them is rightfully theirs, and you see those men come out to you in the feast of life with the roses of joy upon their brows, and the motto of loyalty surmounting all. Give these old populations that which their fathers possessed in other lands and other years a voice in their own affairs, and then you make every man his brother's keeper. You knit society together from highest to lowest, stronger than ever was the shirt of rings which covered their manly breasts in the free if boisterous days of old. You make a contented people, stable and sure,



because their feet are founded on the rock—the rock of justice, underlying all human brotherhood.”

Then, as if he dreaded that his message might be evaporating in mere declamation, the preacher paused and grew more colloquial.

“But remember how those rights were lost, my friends. Very slowly, vrey gradually. Sometimes by violence, but mostly by the indifference and idleness which would risk nothing to retain them, or the greed which let them go because they would not pay a few pounds to cover their representatives’ expenses. They were lost *piecemeal*. They will only be regained in the same way. By courage, by perseverance, by appealing to the great spirit of justice which never leaves the public heart, by your own moral worth, by your wrongs, by your rights, by the manly fortitude which froths not into impotent threats, and scorns the petulance of childish violence, by what you are, and nobly struggle in the scale of moral manhood to become, by the growing intelligence which you love much and the increasing rectitude which you must love more—by these things, and all the virtues



which adorn the citizen character, shall you draw back to your hands the franchises which you covet as the crown of every highest possession. And, my friends, if you look at things in this light, you will sorrow with me over the events of these last three days. You will bemoan that folly which has driven backward the cause which I would have given my right hand to have pushed forward but one single step. You will grieve that you have forced some of your brethren to reveal the stern manhood which glorifies our race, and which our brethren there—"pointing to the soldiers—"have proved but recently on so many glorious fields. You will regret that you forced men unused to arms to show what they can do under the sense of intimidation and wrong. You will mourn with me over the chastised valour of mistaken men, suffering now from wounds of body or greater wounds of heart and soul, hiding in pain to-day to live in exile for years to come. You will let no word of reproach fall upon that bravest man of all—a man of another communion than mine, but whose heart and lips are given to the Great Master's service, and

whose ministry, for such I esteem it, meets with acceptance from many God-fearing souls—you will throw no accusations after that man, because by one sudden impulsive blow he rid himself of the murderers that beset his lonely midnight path. You will remember the Christian manhood which was as a wall of adamant to protect those women and children from harm. You will not forget the heroic forbearance which, fronting the danger, bore wounds when beset, rather than smite again and increase the shedding of blood. Moreover, avoiding reproach, you will silently, as he wishes, offer him no words of praise—words which can only recall the red images of a great regret—but you will, if you follow my advice, keep these words within your inmost selves, and, cherishing the sentiments of admiration for what is brave and good, feed your own hearts on a noble and stimulating food. Reverence God. Love the brotherhood. Honour the King, and the laws by which the King himself is bound.”

There was much talk as the congregation dispersed. The hot Radicals said th’ Kewritt were reet, but timid in doctrine. The high

and dry Tories said he was crackt an' nowt else. The middle class betwixt the two, the major part, said there was a good deal in what Mr. Digby said. Captain Butler looked thoughtful but not displeased.

“I wish these wild folks would be ruled by Monsell,” he said to himself, “and then gentlemen of my profession would have less of this work to do.”

## CHAPTER III.

### SELF-UPBRAIDINGS.

THE verdict of the jury was "Justifiable homicide." The verdict of a large moiety of the public was, "Sarve 'em right;" of a smaller one, "Revenge;" of Alf and Tom, "We'll do it again if they drive us to it;" of Andrew, "It is a sure judgment on us;" of the women, "Sorrow upon Sorrow;" of the mill owners, "Thank you very much." The verdict of Captain Butler, Lieutenant Chetwynd, the sergeants and men of the 10th, "A doosid clever thing." The verdict of the rustics, who crowded into the Fold like locusts on the following Sunday was open-mouthed wonder, and a look as if they could have swallowed bodily the marvellous beings who had done it.

It was a sad sight to these peaceful secluded people—for they were secluded in their own primitive ways and untravelled habits, although within ten miles of a great

town—when they saw relatives coming to claim their dead and bearing them away to their last home. It was, perhaps, sadder to listen furtively to the whispered stories of men and boys that were supposed to be hidden away wounded and dying—of youths who had disappeared from home, perhaps for ever, and prisoners taken by the cavalry which Captain Butler, on his way to the village, had sent scouring the country after the clouds of dispersing fugitives whom they beheld from their saddles. The prisoners went hand-cuffed to gaol, a sore trial to those free-born shackle-hating Britons; the fugitives scattered over the country, and wandering to beg as tramps—a sad downfall to many a proud independent spirit. The wounded lay in out of the way nooks and corners, suffering in secret, and in secret tended by pitying women, to whom they were often strangers, with a love and faithfulness which might have done honour to the sublime devotion of a Flora Macdonald.

The Ashtons came and looked at the damage to their machinery, and ordered it to be put right; the overlookers, like Tom, who

was not forgotten by his masters, made ready for a fresh start, and the hands, after a week of idleness, were withdrawn from the roads and fields, the pigeon flying, dog fighting, and rabbit hunting, to bend to the labours of production once more. Outward quiet and custom put on the old face and the old habit, but in secret souls there had been a great heartquake, which had engulfed buildings and cities, old peace and old landscapes of feeling and thought, leaving a newer but less loveable world behind.

Andrew Heron was a sadder man. The jury had sought to soothe his troubled spirit with kindly justifying words, when they sat in inquest upon the body of Peeping Daniel, but the voices of the coroner, foreman, and jury, had not consoled him. He had slain a man, and the only consolation he could offer himself was that on the following day he had not slain another when under the provocation as great, if not as sudden. He had yielded to the fears of the flesh in the first case, although not in the second, and he felt he had shown something of a want of trust in the protecting

mercies of the Most High—mercies which might ever be expected to be most over His servants when dispensing His Word. He grieved much in secret. He was but little consoled under the brightening looks of mother and maiden whenever he met them—precious wordless thanksgivings for that firm, manly protection, behind whose commanding front they had sheltered from some dreadful moments secure as the dove in the clefts of the rock. He trembled in heart. The knees of the mind smote together in fear when he thought of “those few sheep in the wilderness,” the little flock at Heydale, and the larger one at Middlewood—estranged from him in every finer spiritual sympathy, because he had become “a man of blood;” estranged the more refined and spiritualised their religious feelings under his teaching had become.

What would they, what could they think of him, when teaching them to return good for evil? He had been demanding “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” He had taken a life in attempting to perserve his own. True, there were three to one, but something better



than the worst might have been done. True, he had not intended to kill, but he had not been sufficiently cautious to avoid it, even to the last extremity. He was compelled to admit that the Wicked one had tempted him by the snare of personal fear, and got an advantage over him.

“ But I say unto you that ye resist not evil ; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him thy other also”—one of his last texts at Middlewood. It must mean something. Yes, it meant what it said. And sorrow heaped upon sorrow at the thought.

Those very looks of wistful tenderness and admiration were a thorn. The Fold might thank him for his efforts. It might be proud of what its sons had done, but a different feeling must be prevalent at Stretton, Heydale, and Middlewood. *They* had supplied the victims, and, like rootlets of great trees, the connections of such men—friends, admirers, neighbours, opponents, enemies—must run underneath many lives, and feed on the soil of many hearts. A subtle power of severance must be ever at work now, betwixt him and

many to whom he had ministered when they had taken sweet counsel together. A poison, instilled imperceptibly as the dew, must now be dropped into the souls he loved, which it would take long to find a neutraliser thereof. Yes, in those scenes of humiliation, embittered by the triumph of Chadwick Fold, he must expect cold looks, averted heads, and refusing hands, where there was before the love-light of religious sympathy and the grip of Christian salutation. He had but one comforter, the Rev. Monsell Digby, the new Curate of Middlewood, who had walked over twice since that memorable morning when he first made Andrew's acquaintance.

"My friend," he said, "you mistake what you are reading. 'Resist not evil.' True; but take care you do not make it mean, encourage it. A man that resists every inconvenience, fumes at every slight, draws sword at every suspicion, and stabs before proof or even after it, if his dinner is not cooked to his liking, is an unbearable nuisance and not fit for any state of society; much less the highest, the Christian, the faint type, the

pale copy, at its best, of that where the spirits of just men are made perfect. No, my friend, we must not resist evil in all the petty mistakes, annoyances, bad manners, little sins, ignorances, and negligences of life ; bad, often more from want of knowledge than malevolence. And yet we must resist it, or we shall join hands with the devil, and fight against God. Christ resisted the evil suggestions of the Father of lies. We must resist those at times to whom they are suggested and transformed into acts. It is a broad principle, my friend, put broadly, and you kept it when you could have struck down the miscreant who gave you this wound, and only pushed him off."

Andrew groaned a sceptical groan. It *said*, "resist evil," and must mean it entirely.

"Well, then, you must keep it entirely. Don't lock your doors at night to resist burglars. Don't keep your purse safe to resist pickpockets. Don't have laws to resist criminals. Don't resist the devil, the fountain of evil, that he may flee from you."

Andrew stared, but he did not seem to have anything to say.

“No, my principle is, ‘Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good’—hold it in the charity which thinketh no evil and rejoiceth not in iniquity. ‘Overcome evil with good,’ does not mean let good lie at the mercy of evil until it is slain outright.”


The result of this kind of talk was that Andrew’s convictions were rather shaken than changed ; but the immediate effect was a modicum of comfort, and an increase of cordiality towards the Reverend Monsell Digby. He was much thrown back in mind when he visited his little flock at Heydale, on the following Thursday night. The room was not crowded as of yore. There was only one-third of the old faces present, and strangers in small quantity supplied their places. The cordiality of the host and hostess seemed more constrained. The old effusion had disappeared, and a hard look of doubt in the woman, and scrutiny in the man, supplied its place. The very hymn singing seemed to have lost its old unction. Little wonder that the opening prayer—the “*long*” prayer—which people came to hear from Andrew, as they went to others for the sermon—was

without that flavour of spirituality, that many-sided sympathy in its appeals, which it was wont to have.

“O, for an anointing of fresh oil.”

Andrew groaned to himself as he felt his mind wandering, and the old warmth gone. The sermon was no better. He could not speak of the peace of religion, for he had it not. He could not discourse the silent rest of heart in the goodness of God, a favourite theme, for he had been resting, he thought, on the arm of flesh. He could only talk of the trials to believers, their constant risk of backslidings, their suicidal self-trust; and he spoke of these things only in a broken, hollow way.

“A man will say to himself: ‘I cannot fall into this temptation to disown my Christian profession, because wicked men pursue.’ They pursue, and he flees. They overtake him, and he trembles. They threaten violence to his life, and he—” A great choking sob closed the sentence. That sob reinstated Andrew. The women sobbed with him. The men felt that he had been hard pressed. “Three men threatening one man’s life!



What was he to do but the best thing he could. And if a sling and a stone could deliver a David, a stone, without a sling, could not be unlawful to an Andrew."

So reasoned the men on principles their teacher might not have cared to endorse; but he could indorse the warmer shake of the hand when the meeting closed, and the pitying look of the women, into whom the old light was beginning to steal. He noticed that none of the Greenhalghs were present, and he went straight to their house after the last hymn had been sung. He would have preferred to have had his first meeting with them at his little House of God; it would have been much less awkward, and they would insensibly have seen and felt what it would take him a long time to tell them. But it must be done, and the sooner the better.

He had soon crossed the street and knocked at the door. Martha opened it. Her hair, scarcely as smooth and trim as usual, her fine face a dissolving view in which sorrow, joy, fear, chased each other so quickly that they gave a trinity of expression far from re-

assuring to one seeking sympathy and balm for a wounded spirit. Martha seemed to linger with the door in her hand—the old, pleasant way of throwing it open with a hospitable swing and a bashful look, suggestively absent. There was hesitancy, doubt. Andrew would have said, at that moment, suspicion likewise.

“ Oh ! Martha, and do you take against me, too ? ”

The great grey eyes brimmed up at once, and she faintly said—

“ No, come in.”

The mother and father looked as if his presence was perplexing. Andrew had never seen that look before. “ Well,” he thought to himself, “ my presence may bring danger upon them, and some lawless persons may wreak the vengeance on this abode which he dare not visit on the roof that covers my brother Tom.”

“ If you think, Mr. Greenhalgh, as my coming here will bring trouble upon you, I’ll not call again.”

They protested that they had no such fears, and yet still they feared. Martha seemed to

cast an upbraiding look at him when he had spoken. Yet there was no invitation to take refreshment as once there used to be. They did not wish to offend him. Clearly they did not desire his visit, and something told him he must curtail it at once.

"I should like very much to see Mrs. Mercer, if only for a moment."

It was joyfully assented to. As soon as Andrew had ascended the stairs the pantry door opened, and a miserable creature, dirty, gaunt, and wolfish, his fair hair a mousy tangle, and his once white shirt stained with earth and pigment, apparently brown, that made Martha shudder.

It was Willy Greenhalgh, the child of their hope, on whose head for some days a price had been put. He had left a concealment, whose darkness, cold, and discomfort could only be relieved by a furtive hand, and was such that prison and gibbet seemed endurable thoughts in comparison. He had come in whilst Andrew's little meeting was being held, and the certainty of a visit from him, with Willy just returned, caused the constraint and perplexity we have seen. They



were much shocked at their son's appearance. They were in greater dread of the constable's advent. They did not know what to do as regarded Andrew. It was dangerous knowledge for him to possess, and they did not at this instant know in what light he might look at it. Willy dissipated something of this confusion by his fierce demand for food, and by his cool commanding way—for the lad, with peril, had leaped into manhood—but much remained for Andrew's inspection. To bar the door when the boy came in, to give him food, and put him in their most secret room, was one of their first acts, and to keep everyone out of the house until dark was one of their first resolutions. It was easy enough to carry out the latter, for they were not "neighbouring" folks, if it had not been meeting night. But Andrew—what must they do about him? They could resolve on nothing and the result was they hurt his feelings, when they meant to do nothing of the kind.

"I should like to see Mrs. Mercer."

He is soon alone with her. The bed and its hangings seemed as snowy white as ever;

the grand mass of hair seemed even whiter, and the face—yes, something had happened since last they met to infuse into it a more spiritual look, to blanch it with a more unearthly beauty, and to file its features down to a finer sharpness. The softened eyes, once so bright in youth, are duller, with some load infilling their lids; the mouth is closed with a sterner will; the hands are more restless, stroking the bedclothes or wandering to cap, or face or neck. The old dignity is there, but in this high nervous tension it seems to be tossing like a king's crown on a heaving deck.

“Mr. Heron, I'm very glad to see you. I've wished sorely to speak with you, to tell you how much I have sympathised with the trials you have borne, trials heavy to a Christian mind like yours, which would shrink from taking arms even when arms alone were of any use. And that shameful attack upon you after you left us last Thursday. I'm sure every woman would expect you to act with the courage you did.” A feeling of pleasure stifled with an immediate pang in Andrew's breast. “And if you had not met that attack

as you did at Chadwick Fold, we should have had to deal with it here, and no such breast-work of heroes for we poor weak women to hide behind. But oh ! Mr. Heron, it has been a sore trial for us since then. You got the stocking, did you not ? I was afraid that it would be too late."

Andrew nodded.

" Ah ! well that would put you on your guard. I'm glad I did something in the cause."

It seemed to please the old lady that she had been the only means of forewarning them.

" God knows what need of comfort she has," he said to himself, " and it cannot be unpardonable to let her keep the impression she has got."

After an agitated pause she continued—

" We have had a sore burden put upon us since then, Mr. Heron. After I had got from Willy a hint of the time of attack, and I had made him promise me by the very force of my grief that he would not go—and indeed I do believe the boy loves his poor old granny as he loves no one else in the house—I

heard a low whistle under his bedroom window; then the lifting of the window, and a rough, grating voice talking with him and telling him he would be a coward if he did not get up and be off at once. I'm sure it was that wretch they call Squire."

"A master-coward," ejaculated Andrew.

"Well, in a moment, before I could rouse anyone, I heard the lad dropping from his window-sill into the garden, and we have never seen him since. Never heard nor seen him since," she repeated, looking a vacant look, as if the very thought took away her senses.

Andrew waited until she was more composed, and then tried the balm of a mutual sorrow, telling her his own sufferings during the dreadful interval since they parted.

Walking the *viâ dolorosa* together makes very incongruous characters friends. It portals those that have an affinity for each other into a temple of concord, where hearts can open and lips may speak as they can speak and open nowhere and nowhen else. And theirs were souls of this kindred class, and the presence of each was a great support to the other.

"But oh! Mr. Heron, shall I ever see that lad again? If I could but once look at his face and know that he might get safely through this trouble I could say with Simeon of old, 'Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word.' I was dozing about an hour ago, and what do you think I dreamed? I fancied I heard him just then in this very house. And I awoke with sounds of voices, that seemed agitated, ringing in my ears."

"Aw will see granny! Aw will if aw dee for't." And the voice sounded near on the stairs, other voices expostulating in undertone.

The old lady started up, turned deadly pale, then, with a "Can it be?" on her lips, she sank back as if she were about to swoon. Her eyes fixed with a strange, lurid look in them on the door, which slowly opened, and Willy, unkempt and unwashed, entered, dirty and miserable looking beyond recognition.

"Mr. Heron, you will not permit—but," she exclaimed, shading her eyes—"yes, it is my poor boy;" and she opened her arms wide, and Willy entered within their circling

love, his dirty aspect brought out into terrible distinctness by the snowy whiteness of the bedclothing and hangings, the flash of the old lady's hair, and the pallor of her countenance. She was much overcome, and her head rested bowed on his breast so long that they began to think she had swooned entirely away. The family gathered closer round the bed peering wistfully. Willy, more patient than youths generally are, remained unmoved. He had become a man at one leap; and, feeling the old woman's heart beating against his own, he knew instinctively that she had not fainted. In a while the head uplifted, the eyes opened, and the muscles in the worn face, that seemed rigid with the tension of keeping feeling repressed, relaxed in a faint smile, and she looked fully into his face. Pleasure gave place to pain as she began to notice the great change in the lad's appearance.

"Have you eaten, have you drunk anything? When will you wash yourself?"

He tells her calmly, with a hollow something in his voice, that he must not change his appearance, which is the most effectual


disguise that he can have for baffling those who can only know him by descriptions of what he was.

“Granny, aw may ha’ been followed yer. Aw mun goo as soon as iver it’s dark enough.”

“Oh! my child, and must thou go so soon? But, indeed, he must,” she said, checking herself. “Where art thou going?”

“Aw dunna knaw, granny. Aw thowt if aw could get away into Borrowdale, where your ohn fowk live, that aw might be safest there.”

“Yes, my boy, I have been thinking of that. Here is a ring which my brother gave me when we were boy and girl together. I never told anyone here which was my old home except old Betty Baron, when she nursed me years ago in my long illness. Make your way to James Morrison, Hope Farm, Borrowdale, and tell him—for I believe he is still living—that his sister’s grandson wants for a little while to help him during the summer at harvesting. Let no one else know that you are anything more than a labourer he has engaged.”



“Yah, granny, aw’ll do that ; and aw mun travel mostly at neet at first. Gie me a kiss and aw’ll goo directly. Aw conna stay here.”

Martha wailed aloud at this. The mother’s face showed tears running swiftly down. The father groaned. The old grandmother seemed as if she were keeping a rising, stifling something under, and did not speak.

“My dear boy,” said Andrew, “I hope that you will get safely away. Keep off the great roads and the great towns. The constables are on the look out. And may God restore you to us when a pardon is obtained after the heat of prosecution is over.”

This gave visible relief. It showed that Andrew would not inform. The lad felt this.

“Aw tow’d ’em,” he said, “when they wanted to keep me fro coming up because yo were here, that Andrew wouldna be worse than Tom. Tom threw me down in th’ scuffle and knocked off th’ bit of crape that aw wore ower my face, an’, when he saw who it was, he whispered, ‘Run for thee life,’ an’ let me go. You’ll not be worse than Tom, Andrew ?”



Andrew, with a great heart-searching, promised, believing that he should have much tribulation for so doing; but justifying himself that he was only extending a negative protection to a dupe who had suffered enough already while the black sheep of the flock were the spies whom Government had employed to suborn them into rebellion.

The youth showed an anxiety to be going.

"Won't you have a good wash, Willy, before you leave us?"

"No, granny. It's my best disguise. Gie me a kiss, and then awm off."

The old woman burst into tears. With almost patriarchal dignity she laid her hands on his head, prayed that he might be kept in the way that he should go, and find friends among the kindred that he sought.

Insensibly they bent their heads reverently while the old woman spake, and when they raised them as she ceased, it was to see that she had fainted away with the unwonted exertion and emotion. When Martha's attentions had brought her round Willy and Andrew were no longer in the room.

In a little while the latter left to find Tom

and Alf waiting to escort him home, and when his parents came downstairs Willy bade them good-bye, and started on his perilous mission of baffling the constables and getting to Borrowdale.


## CHAPTER IV.

### FORGIVENESS.

ANDREW could not screw up courage to go to his Sunday School and service at Middlewood on the first Sabbath after the Battle of Chadwick Fold, as the wits were beginning to call it. It was but the third day after "the battle," and he felt that the sense of turmoil was too strong upon his soul for him to employ himself as a leader in a scene of religious peace and joy.

Others, who felt he was justified in all that he had done—nay, who looked upon him as a hero that brought lustre upon themselves and their cause—were still firmly persuaded that it was not expedient that he should come amongst them on that day. And accordingly they had found "a supply," and sent him "a salutation" and an affectionate enquiry after the condition of the family.

Nevertheless, a vast congregation had assembled in the hope of seeing him at the



service. His friends were there in numbers. Many of a neutral tint were there out of curiosity ; numbers were there as a result of Mr. Digby's sermon that morning, and some enemies of a red-hot hue were there with rotten eggs that were soft enough, and stones that were hard enough, to use, if occasion offered. But they were disappointed ; and in the following days it became generally known that with the exception of striking down a would-be murderer, he had been conspicuous for his forbearance, and, indirectly, had in that way made the necks of several friends a good deal safer than if he had taken a more belligerent attitude.

Hence, there was a large congregation in the club-room, and an overflow in the street, when he stood up to preach, but it was not a dangerous assembly. Had any zealot attempted violence a ring of stern faces would have frowned him out of courage and resolve before he could have repeated his first blow. Danger did not seem to be the thing which was troubling Andrew. It was perplexity within. Should he take for his sermon the bold text, "Thou shalt do no murder," and

discuss the whole question—I. Of society's right to defend itself. II. Of the individual's right to defend himself generally. III. Of Andrew Heron's right to defend himself, particularly when about to be murdered: closing with (1). A Warning—"Be sure your sin will find you out," with reference to certain late events. (2). A Thanksgiving—"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," with reference to their whole history as a congregation in that place. Or should he take the more gentle, soul-searching text, one that had less of the trumpet blast of self-laudation in it, "Lord lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil?"

He could bring in all his self-distrust, all his pity for souls deceived, all his own regrets at being called to take the part that he had in defence of himself and others. True, if he preached in this apologetic tone he might offend Deacon Hill, who was very loud in assertions that the pastor had done what was entirely right. He might chasten the exultations of many who rejoiced that the cause of order had been so signally vindicated. He might offend all those thankful

women who were pointing to him as a heaven-sent defender. But should he not do a better work by chastening the spirit of triumph, arousing the feelings of pity for the victims of spies and knaves, by instilling the sentiment of mercy, by re-kindling the torch of old neighbourly kindness, and by putting himself right with his people as one who sorrowed that he had trusted so much to the arm of flesh and not to the manifestations of the power of God?

This seemed to him "the good part." This came home to his soul "with power;" and, with all the strength of spiritual conviction and special revelation, he chose it for his text. The people saw the sombre cloud, which had hung upon his countenance through the early part of the service, disappear, leaving the light of a June morning upon it, and they felt that their pastor had received "direction." The very text seemed to need no sermon, so clearly did it fall upon every mind what was about to follow. The windings of the sermon along its own sinuous road—turning, like some moving creature, to right and left to pick up the thoughts

adjacent and give them gathered for each—seemed all to be forestalled in the minds of the audience, so completely were they in sympathy with the preacher. And, at last, when he got upon the climax of his theme, his need of help and guidance, his perplexities and errors, his own great sorrows, their hearts seemed to go with his like muffled bells; their eyes fixed with a look that leaped out on the sorrowful face, telling its trials with faltering tongue and gathering tear. We will give but one closing passage.

“Call me not a man of blood, for I cannot live without your love, and I was sore pressed. Praise me not that I bore wounds in avoiding that great weakness of trusting to the arm of flesh, when a moment of reflection was given to me. Triumph not that any poor brother has been defeated in carrying out what he blindly thought was a justifiable purpose; but pray that he may have better light and a heart more obedient to it. Turn not aside with your sympathy from the friends of those who have suffered or must still suffer; but go to them with Christian kindness—go to the weeping mother, the moaning

wife, the childer as will want meat and drink for all this, and, mingling your tears with theirs, carry them bread in the hunger that will come. And, brothers and sisters, join your prayers with mine that I may not be lead into this temptation again; pray that I may never lose the feeling of casting down which has come upon me with these sorrowful days; that I may walk more humbly in everything, and be able to look upon every brother's failings more understandingly and more lovingly, because, being tempted, I have suffered, and wish to be able to succour them that are tempted."

That night after sermon the people felt like those ancient Jews standing before the Tabernacle door, waiting awed for the coming forth of Moses and Aaron, so long did he seem absorbed in private prayer after his discourse. When he gradually rose from his knees with the air of one coming back from another world, and slowly regaining the sense of the new scene into which he had returned, the more favoured and familiar of the congregation drew towards him. One took his hand in his, and gently assured him that they



would make him the subject of their constant prayers, and endeavour to follow after all that he had taught them that evening. Others added words of sympathy and friendship. But the most of them felt that silence and their presence offered the most natural cordial to his spirit.

Andrew bowed his head gravely and deprecated further speech with a gentle motion of his hand, and, like one chastened in spirit, moved silently towards the door. The people were still in numbers hanging about the further end of the room, looking on from afar. They made way for him respectfully and silently, as with wordless greeting—an unwonted thing for him—he passed out. His more attached and familiar friends walked with him in silence along the road, many of the cottagers coming to the doors to gaze at him as he passed, and mothers taking up their children to point him out in subdued tones.

They had gone some distance, many dropping silently out of the little company from an instinct that told them it was good to leave him to himself, and only a small band

of six were with him when at sunset they approached the great elm tree.

“My friends,” he said, “your kindness is great, but God wants to deal with my soul alone. Let us say good-night here, and pray for each other much until we are permitted to meet on another Sabbath.”

They shook him silently by the hand, none being able to struggle with the spell of constraint which was upon them.

Andrew sat him down near the tree—it was the tryst which Tom had arranged—and was lost in meditation before the last of his friends had turned the first bend of the road. He had not observed a woman coming after them and quietly seating herself behind a wall whilst his following passed by. He did not see her when she arose and came towards him—an old woman in dark clothing, with a deeply-marked gipsy kind of face, whose dark hair showed signs of age—“a sable-silvered.”

She stood before him and he did not see her. She spoke, and he started.

“Will yo goo and speak a word to a mon deeing?”

The thought seemed to recall him to himself more quickly than anything else could have done.

“Is it far?”

“No; but yo’ll nohn say owt to onybody?”

Andrew acquiesced, and they began to ascend the hill over which Peeping Daniel had disappeared when Ned Lodge tempted him.

They crossed several fields, and came at last to a long cowshed of some half-dozen stalls. They entered. At the end, behind the heaped up hay, hidden so carefully that no one would have suspected there was a passage, the woman uncovered a hole, and they crept through to find themselves in a small open space.

Andrew knew they were not alone, for he heard some one breathing heavily. A light disclosed to him a dying man laid on the hay, which showed brown spots here and there as if discoloured by gouts of blood. It was Amos Saynor, the fierce Radical whose wild speech Andrew had combatted at the Hampden Club.

The man turned up his face with a nervous, glaring look—a hard, eager look, which, with the tightened nostrils and mouth, the suppressed, difficult breathing, told Andrew how short a time the poor creature had to live.

“You’ve come at last,” he gasped, with a harsh, reproachful, stony manner.

He seemed to be fancying that Andrew had long been sent for, and had only just reluctantly come.

“Wonna yo pray for me, an’ say awm noan sure aw did reet ta goo feyting—an’—burnin’ an’ them mak’—o’ mar—locks.”

Here his voice failed.

Andrew relieved him by kneeling down at once. He made a long prayer in order to give the man time to compose himself and recover his little strength, and also to weave in with the petitions some of that elementary instruction in sacred things which the poor man needed, and which those skilled in such cases, and accustomed to such scenes, know can be instilled in that way more subtilty than by direct teaching.

“Aw’ll try to pray, as yo say, for mysen, to Him as will yer when we ca’,” was the


direct evidence that Andrew got when he rose from his knees, as Amos took his hand with a wistful, softened look. "Yo'll come agen, winna yo?"

"Yes; only look unto Jesus. You can often say for yourself, 'Lord pardon. Lord have mercy upon me.' Can't you?"

The man had some message that seemed as if it must be delivered, even if he died in doing it—a message like the burden of an Isaiah, that must be laid down at its right time and place if the prophet must have peace.

In broken speech and gasping breath he tells his story, which we translate—

"You know, Andrew, I always wanted to settle our quarrel with capitalists and machinery by violence, and we have tried and failed. And it is well that we have failed. And when I am gone, and you speak to others as you have just done to me and for me, tell them the story of Amos Saynor, who died—and I must soon die—wishing that he might have lived to tell himself the things which have come into his mind during the eight days he has laid hiding here in pain



and contrition. Say I regret that I have led others wrong, like Willy Greenhalgh, Jim Smith, and Seth Haig, and say I wish all to know I think it folly to attempt to fight Government, as you and Sam Bamber, and that new Curate of Middlewood have always taught; say they must strive on, but always peacefully, and English minds will grant to reason what English courage will never yield to threats. But know, Andrew, if I've been a tempter I've been tempted. It was that fiend Ned Lodge, whom I saw set everybody on at Chadwick Fold and then sneak away, found me first in Swain's hushshop and used me ever afterwards. I watched him come round to the mill and set us on, and I was just turning to ask him to join me in getting through a window that was near when the last rush was made in the lower room, and I saw him sneaking off. 'Coward,' I shouted, 'come here;' but he never turned, and I was just raising my gun to give him his benefit when I was struck here—in the left shoulder-blade—with duck-shot. They got me here, did some of the lads, at great risk to themselves; but Andrew, if that man

is ever seen in Middlewood, root him out—say Amos Saynor *knows* he's a spy."

His strength began to fail, and he seemed to settle down into the passivity of a state of semi-coma.

In a little while he recovered, as if by the power of his will.

"There is one thing which I cannot carry with me to my grave; if I did I should come back with it. You knew Silas Baron, Squire's brother? He was innocent. Squire wanted him out of the way, thinking he could take all then from the old woman, and he did not know that she was his match, and your Tom her friend. Silas was with me and another man, Jabez Tebbutt of Stretton, when they said he was out poaching. It was Squire that poached, and we, thinking mates should stick together—Squire was one of our great men, we thought him true then—wouldn't give evidence for Silas, but went out of the district until his case was disposed of. Get that wrong righted, Andrew; I shall not rest in my grave if you don't do that. Now say another prayer before you go, for I shall not see morning."

"I will pray with you. Then I must go and bring Mr. Digby, the Curate, to hear what you say about Silas Baron along with this good woman—she had sat mute as a statue at his feet, sobbing, bent with grief—and we'll take it down, and then we can get Silas released from the man-of-war."

He nodded assent, and Andrew prayed again while Amos closed his eyes as if to shut out earth and steady the soul's gaze upon that future which lay so awfully near before him.

A warm grasp of the hand, and a warning "Be sharp" from the dying man, and Andrew was gone. He found Monsell at home, and they quickly returned, having picked up Tom, who entered, at his own request, the shippen with them, and stood near while they pushed through the rat-like entrance into the dying man's presence.

He was far gone, as the woman, with a hushing gesture, made them understand. They gazed solemnly at the pallid brow and white, icy-looking nose and matted hair, the tossing, dream-troubled head. Presently he showed signs of awaking out of his lethargy,



the tossing of the head ceased and the heavy sleepy breathing, and the eye opened with its leaden, unspeculating look. But slowly the mind awoke and their images gathered upon it, and Silas gradually became, for a few moments, all himself.

"Amos Saynor, you say Silas Baron is innocent, and was with you and Jabez Tebutt in Swain's house at Stretton Fold when they said he was poaching?"

He nodded assent.

"I must write that down," said Mr. Digby.

"He will not live till you do it," whispered Andrew.

"And you say that Ned Lodge tempted you into these courses, and you led Willy Greenhalgh, Jim Smith, and Seth Haig into this trouble?"

Another nod, but the drowse seemed coming on.

"And you know you are dying, and forgive all enemies as you hope to be forgiven by the God before whom you will soon appear?"

Another nod, and the breathing became more stertorous.

"Then will you forgive my brother Tom,

who shot you, and who is close here at hand?"

The man roused up with a great start, and for the first time spoke—

"Aw will."

Tom heard, and instantly crept through into his presence. The dying man held out his hand, which Tom took, and then he fell back seemingly quite exhausted.

"Pray, sir," said Andrew; and Monsell's voice was heard saying—

"Most humbly we beseech Thee that this poor soul may become precious in Thy sight. Wash it, we pray Thee, in the blood of that immaculate Lamb, which was slain to take away the sins of the world; that whatsoever defilements it may have contracted in the midst of this miserable and naughty world, through the lusts of the flesh or the wiles of Satan, being purged and done away, it may be presented pure and without spot before Thee—" Something bade him cease. They rose from their knees. Ah! yes, "the night was far spent, the day was at hand," at last. The eyes of Amos were fixed, looking upwards, whither their hearts and minds did ascend,

a bright soul-light shining as through their films of horn, his hand fast locked still in Tom's.

The night, with its weary sins and sorrows had waned, and the endless morning had opened to him as he held in forgiveness the hand of the weeping man who had wrought his death.

## CHAPTER V.

### EN ROUTE.

WILLY GREENHALGH and Jim Smith, after living nearly a week in the hole which the lord of Bracken Farm had scooped out in order to enable him to manufacture illicit whiskey with greater ease, got so wearied that they determined to risk detection rather than stay any longer in such a doleful abode. Accordingly, when evening set in, they left the Bracken Farm and made their way across the moors to their separate abodes, arranging to meet towards midnight at the old chapel near Knowl Hill. We have seen Willy at home, parting with his family. Jim's was not much more cheerful, but he left his people with a resolution which made their separation inevitable. The advice of a seafaring man was that, if he wished to get out of the way, there was nothing like entering on board a man-of-war, and the chances were that he would find one at Liverpool.

“Willy must make shift without me. Every man for himself and God for us all,” said Jim in his heart, as he made his way through Ashworth Wood up to the old church. Their greeting when they met was the greeting of people who use each other with no spontaniety about it, an effort to look friendly, and a hard watching of each other’s moods and faces.

Would Willy go with him to sea, said Jim. No, he had made up his mind to wander north, and try his luck there. Sea would be much better. Lots of strange places and things to look at. “Come, Willy, go with me.” But Willy would have none of it. Well, then, as they couldn’t go together would Willy accompany him over the moors until morning, towards Liverpool? No, they could go their own ways, said the lad, from the first. Well, then, let them part as friends. Sure-ly Willie would tell him where he was going. Willy said he was going just to where he should get.

And so they parted coolly enough. All through the night the young man pushed on, and at early morning found himself near a house which he felt sure was

a wayside hostelry. The folks were already busy abroad, mowing or digging turf on the adjacent moor. No one was in the house save the good wife, and a woman's pity seemed to enter her eyes immediately after the quick scrutinising glance she gave him at his entrance. She seemed to read his story beneath the disguise of squalor and dirt which he had not removed. He could well afford to pay for a breakfast if she would give him one. Willy's pocket reminded him of his mother emptying her little store of spare cash from the best teapot into it, and Martha pressing into his hands, as they parted, the whole of her little savings towards a new gown, that was doubtless intended to work havoc upon somebody's feelings, and that somebody a preacher against vanity. The woman answered that "he would want more than breakfast. He looked as if he had walked all night, and would want to do so again. This was doubtful greeting, but it did not look as bad as it sounded. He heard her mutter to herself, as she busied about some bacon, that there was no telling what her own lad might want. Breakfast over, she

showed him an attic where there was a bed, and he could sleep all day, for no one would disturb him. "He's a fair looking lad if he were wesht," she said to herself, as she swept the floor. "There's nowt slinking about him, like that felly that cam spurrin' yesterday."

Willy slept soundly enough until noon, when he was awoke by heavy clogs on the stone floor below, and the clatter of knives and forks, as if several noisy labourers were at dinner. He fell asleep again, and when all was still she awoke him to give him some food. She sat in the room as he ate it, and casually remarked that his dirty skin would not conceal him, and his fair hair would certainly betray him. She went down and brought up water and soap, and told him to comfort himself with a good wash, and she would find a way of disguising him better than the one he was employing. Willy felt he could trust the woman, and when, in a little while she brought up some liquid and applied it to his hair and eyebrows, he felt sure she was acting in good faith. The result to him was startling. The fair hair was now

a rich nut brown, and had he suddenly, without knowing she had done it, looked at a mirror he would certainly have concluded that he had become somebody else. She brought a labourer's peat-stained clothes, and bidding him put those on when evening came and be quite ready to follow her, she left him to his own devices. Willie slept much. The bed was invitingly soft and clean, compared with what he had for a week, and he felt much in need of rest. At dusk she motioned him to follow her out by the back way, and bade him hide for an hour in the stable. At the end of that time she came and gave him directions how to proceed over the wild moors and hills bordering on Lancashire and Yorkshire, telling him that she thought during the next day he had better sleep on the heather until afternoon, and then travel on to a place she indicated, rest there, and then go on regularly in the day time, for he would then be out of the area of pursuit.

"Aw rekkon yo've been getting into trouble in a riot."

Willy nodded assent.

"Yah, it struck me soo. A lad o' mine's



i' trouble, and other folk are helping him, an' aw mun help yo." She would take no money, seeming to think that it was the only way open to her of acknowledging the obligation her own boy was under to other people.

"Tell me," he said, "whatn yo called?"

"Mary Yep?" (Heap).

Willy travelled on over the open country and the heathery wastes, then much more abundant than now, the clear starlight helping him through the short night. When morning began to appear he found himself on high ground that gave him a view of the surrounding country as it gradually appeared through the light fleecy haze, which had settled down in the lower valleys and recesses. His heart swelled with hope when the sun arose and the wide circle revealed itself in gold, and lonely cot and clustering villages, to be hereafter knitted into some great manufacturing town, told of the life and enterprise which lay around. The sense of being an exile from home and a fugitive from the law disappeared in that thrilling moment as the keen, life-giving air blew over him bearing the distant shepherd's voice and

the barking of his dogs. He wondered what were the names of the hills which lifted up their peaks like Knoll Hill, beneath which he was born. He wondered what sort of people lived in those villages, if the men who traversed these hills were as kindly as those near Stretton and Royston. He pushed on. He heard a bird sing from a lonely tree, and straightway his mind went to another solitary tree in their garden where such another thrush had often sung in the morning when he rose early to go to his work. His mother and sister, whose money jingled in his pocket; his dear old grandmother, whose valuable trinket was carefully hung round his neck; his father—all their faces passed before his memory; their voices came clear and distinct to his ear again, as if they were then calling to him across the waste; the very things which in an hour they would be preparing for his father, and in thought for himself, all came before his eyes, one after another, clear as those scattered clouds tinged with morning's glory above his head, and gradually his eye grew moister, and he brushed another dew than that which glis-

tened at his feet with his hand from his cheek. He pushed on the quicker as if to get away from these thronging thoughts, and soon the natural elasticity of youth enabled him to look over the hill tops of his emotions, and dwell on the Goshen beyond—the fair valley scene above Derwent Lake, and that pleasant farm-house where granny was born in Borrowdale.

On the third and fourth days he began to notice that there was a great change in the hills to which he clung while still travelling northwards. The rocks began to grow whiter and to break oftener through the soil, showing all sorts of fantastic flutings, and groovings, and hollows, in their snowy breasts. Once he got a view of a distant scene on his right which at first he took for snow on the hills, so wide and continuous did the long lines of white surface show up; but a man told him it was “Nobbut Mawm”—Malham, the source of the River Aire, and the great limestone scene in Craven. He noticed also that the roads were often littered or repaired with a kind of broken rock which splintered into beautiful pieces of stony

stick, and when he examined it and broke an inch or two of it up, it came away in stony coins, or little solid wheels, beautifully marked on their sides. Had there been only one or two of these he would have picked them up as curiosities to give to Martha or granny, but there were so many that he thought the country was made of them, and he only pocketed one or two of the finest specimens as a present to the persons whose faces peeped out from his memory as he did it.

But it was not all the rapture of new scenes and new emotions. Willy, like other folks, could not deny his past, nor would it be denied. A sense of folly, at times of positive wickedness, stole upon him when laid on some heathery bed with the night coming down and the solemn stillness curtaining all—a sense of sin unregretted. He had been one of Andrew Heron's people. He had often joined his voice to the singing in his meetings. He had helped in getting the people together, giving out the hymn books to such as could read, seeking up those who were staying away and compelling them

to come in. He had been fervent in the prayers, ready with his "Amen" at the end of the longest of the long prayers, never sleeping like other youths had done. Andrew had treated him as a "chosen vessel," had taken him aside, had talked to him seriously, asking him if he was a Christian—if he seriously wished to be one? And then there had been sweet talk betwixt them of God's forgiveness, and the blessedness of being at peace with Him and a joint heir with His Son, and of the mansions all might inherit if they would. These things came in that great calm, in those solemn wakings when the summer night looked down in thousands of eyes, and all was still save its soughing airs or the distant sheep dog's bark—came "with power," the seed of future fruit. But pairing with them, a blessed agony, came the hateful memories lifting their dark hydra heads, the gloomy thoughts of errors welcomed and walked in;—the jibing apprentice sneering at Andrew and his cant; the bad books, the scoffing books lent to him and read—read in secret at first and more unblushingly afterwards; the slackening attendance

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at meeting; the falling off altogether; the dodging Andrew to avoid him when he came to the house; the running after bad, scheming, wild-talking men, the wild deeds and the result—eating of the grapes of Sodom, bitter, bitter, bitter. Yes, on the lonely hills the lonely chastening thoughts began, the stirrings of life that preceded a new birth.

One day he had travelled long and seen no place where he cared to ask for refreshment, until from the side of the hill he looked down on a fine stone and brick mansion with woods on either side. It suddenly occurred to him that there might be men servants there, and he would ask them for something to eat. He had occasionally, as a smith, repaired iron work and bell wires in some of the richer houses near Heydale and Middlewood, and he might offer to earn a meal with smithing here. He could not think of begging. His swift young feet soon carried him thither. He noticed, in the little park in the front of the house, that the cattle looked sleeker, and the sheep finer and whiter than did the cottagers' along the high moorland country he had traversed. He observed that the drive

was very trimly kept and everything indicated a most fastidious regard for neatness and appearance. He made for the back door and the stables. There was a carriage that looked as if it had been lately out—a fine-roomy, yellow vehicle. A man without coat or vest, with his shirt sleeves rolled up above the elbows, was cleaning a curb chain in a cloth; another was rubbing a fine, majestic-looking horse; a third was bringing water to wash the carriage wheels; and a fourth, further up the stable yard, was busy swilling and sweeping it. These came only gradually into Willy's view. A majestic being was sitting smoking a big cigar, and giving his opinions or his orders, as the case might be.

“Jawn, fitch the-aw, the-aw, the misheen, end raise thet wheel.”

John looked sulky, but obeyed.

“Bill, why do you rub the horse up that way? You'll make him as rough as a porkypine.”

“Well, yang min, end what do you want? I'm not wanting any hands for *my* stables.”

Willy explained that he was not seeking

ostler's work, but was very hungry, and had not been able to get anything in crossing the moors. Could he mend any bells, &c., for something to eat?

"I should think you wouldn't be able to get any dinner," said the great man with disdain. "They would starve a Scotchman. It's enough to give a gentleman the horrors to go there for a day. I know what I suffered the last time I went shooting over our preserves on those confounded moors. I prefer Lannen to moors, hills, lakes, fields, and the whole bag o' tricks."

The men seemed to wonder at the power of speech of this wonderful being, who took a long pull at his cigar, and then slowly and enjoyably puffed out a vast cloud, whilst he drew in mentally with even more delight the silent applause of his auditors. But he recollected himself.

"I think, yang min, you said something about refreshment. Go round to the side door, and give Mr. Farmer's compliments to the servant, and ask for a plate o' meat." Then recollecting that his dignity might have an awful fall, if Jemima, the cook, declined



his compliments, he said, "I see my cigar's out. I'll go round with you, as there is something in your appearance, yang min, which I like."

Mr. Peter Farmer would not be denied by Jemima, and soon a good plate of beef and a flagon of beer were placed before Willy.

Mr. Farmer eyed Willy very closely, but still, as he afterwards said, "like a gintleman." Not a continuous stare, but a series of keen, searching glances, that sought to fasten on something outside to bring into clearness a dim something within him, just as the photographer's dark room and acids bring out the sun-lines on the plate.

"Yang min, I have seen you before."

"Indeed!" was Willy's disappointing reply, although he had recognised the coachman from the first.

"Yes, I cawn't tell where I've seen you, but I have." Silence. Willy only looks up from a bone which he is picking, with a sense of good things in hand. "You've not been in Lannen, I see?" Willie wagged his head from east to west, to indicate "No," busy all the while with the bone. "Ah, that's the

place, where you can show what driving is. Here there's no scope, and nobody's a judge. I never had a chance out of Lannen of showing what driving is until ten days ago, when we got amongst those dimmed, blood-thirsty savages near Manchester, at a place they call Middlewood. Do you know that place, young man?"

Willy had seen it.

"Well, it was awful. The beer was disgraceful, quite behind the hage; the beds were boards, and the air was bad, smoky stuff. But the people were worst of all. Awful barbarians. Eat nothing but porridge, and when they went rook shooting, they go firing mills and blazing at the poor devils as they jump out of the winders. Pity but they would kill each other off, and then there'd be some hope for the country. Yes, didn't I show them what driving was, when Miss Feely requested me—in a way a lady does request a gentleman, I will say that for her—to drive quickly out of the town. I rather think that Curate was astonished at the distance he had to walk when we put him down. Ah! ah! ah!" and Mr. Farmer got a little

compensation out of his hilarity for the awful perils and privations that he had endured amidst those "confounded, blue-aproned savages."

Mr. Farmer, who had hidden himself during most of the twenty-four hours that he was at Middlewood in the public-house, had seen a couple of dye works disgorging their hands, and had seen some of these gentry coming into the "Ashton Arms" in their unwashed livery, and his refined soul, saturated as it was with the essence of West End "Lannen," had naturally taken the alarm.

Willy thanked him for his dinner, but the great man waved all thanks away with an eloquent motion of the hand—Mr. Farmer had a very gentlemanly way of waving his hand, and often practised it on occasions similar to the present—and would have contributed a mental feast to the physical one by retailing his London experiences, the great things that he had done there, the greater thoughts which mankind had thought of them; but Willy was ungrateful. He wanted to be going, and preferred to trouble the gentleman for his knowledge of the roads north-

wards. There is patronage in dispensing knowledge and Mr. Farmer was quite affable on the subject, and gave Willy a good idea of the trend of the highways, but was not equal to the short cuts and sheep tracks across the mountains. Willy rose to go.

“What’n yo ca’ this place, and who bides yer?”

“It is Kulm Hall. What else did you ask, yang min?” said Mr. Farmer, leaning forward as if very puzzled. “It was not Lannen English.”

“Who bides yer; aw mean, who lives in’t?” said Willy, blushing.

“Oh! I see. The Misses Spinks live here. Perhaps, Sarah, the yang min would like to see the hall?”

Willy declined with thanks. He knew he wanted to be on his way, but he did not know that he should see the place again. He noticed that there was a multiplicity of clocks. A great turret one over the stables; a large eight-day clock in the kitchen; a smaller one in the pantry, and another in the servants’ hall, and distant tickings telling of clocks elsewhere.

"'Tis wise in man to give a tongue to Time," he had once heard his school-master say; "but these ladies preferred to give him a dozen," Willy thought. "Aw wonder if they behave ony better for it." He trudged stoutly forward along the highway. "Aw tow'd that pompous lacky," said Willy reflectively to himself, as he pushed on, "that aw'd mak for th' north. He'll tell all that comes near him what aw've saeid. So here goes for th' moors that lie twixt that setting sun and th' north star! They may catch me if they can that way," and he left the main road and followed a bridle track up towards the hills. A bed of heather during the next warm July night was rather agreeable than otherwise, and a breakfast at any chance cottage he met, where they always offered him a drink of milk without payment, a wash in the sparkling rills that came tumbling down the sides of the hills, was literally enjoyment to Willy. The sense of pleasure now thrilled in his young veins; the enterprise of travel; the thought of freedom and power as he looked out with wonder and delight on the mountains con-

tinually growing higher and grander; the keener and more bracing air, all combined to lift up his spirits and make him feel as if his soul bathed in the free atmosphere of congenial delights. His health improved, his strength increased, his powers of walking grew until he seemed at night unaware that he had been mounting over rough, broken ground ever since the dawn. The sense of fatigue disappeared, and that of the tourist took its place. The feeling of self-respect was unmarred by the fear of having to beg, for the money which mother and sister had forced upon him held out wonderfully. The people generally would take nothing for the food they gave him. Lodgings were cheap when his chamber was the moor and his bed the heather, and food was not expensive when the lonely shepherd shared his brown bread and bacon with him for a little information about the great world outside, which seemed to him as wonderful as tales of Cathay and the Great Mogul to earlier generations. Besides, Willy, when he did venture into some moorland inn, found them very cheap compared with the "Ashton Arms" and

other places he knew. No, he need fear nothing now. He must be out of the way of pursuit by this time. He had plenty of money to last him on these terms for weeks and weeks, and, if he failed, could he not help some village smith for a day or two and then go on, a kind of chartered wanderer of the freest kind, breathing this pulse-quickenning air until his breast swelled as if it would double its girth? He had only one thought, only one regret. How could he let his friends know that he was safe and free? He could write, but he knew nothing of postal arrangements, and he feared much the danger of sending a letter. He must think of that. And he did think about it, and the subject grew darker and more dangerous the more he pondered it over. The only wise resolution he could arrive at was, that he would wait until he got to his Uncle Morrison's, if that uncle was in the flesh, and then interest him in his case and take him into his confidence. Still, this implied delay, for, strong in his Lancashire independence of feeling, he had formed a little plan of commending himself to the moorland farmer by his work rather than

by his relationship, as an advantage to him rather than as a burdensome charge. No, he would not go to a man who might thank him and willingly pay him well for his services with wages, rations and shelter as a workman, but who might vapour about his generosity and protection if he got the same services from him for nothing as a relative. Willy had heard the old Danish proverb that "there is no taskmaster so hard as a kinsman," and he preferred commercial principles, something for something, rather than that. Besides he was not sure that his uncle might care to know the grandson of John Mercer, the stonemason. He was not sure that he had regretted his harsh conduct to his sister, and he was not sure that his was a character which easily forgot the ills done to it, or the ills which it had done to others. He must wait and see, and, in the meantime, he must be cautious.

One day he found himself—for he had necessarily made much leeway in his journeying through bye ways and over moors and fells, as the people now began to call them—skipping from stone to stone along a moorland beck. It



was a easier mode of getting along, as the banks were black rotten peat, giving away at every step, and the moor itself, in its yellow patches and dark watery hollows, seemed little better. It was a wild, desolate scene, but Willy had got to love such lone retreats, and a shepherd had told him that, if he bore away to the west, he would be in Appleby that night.

It was a still, hot day in early July. The summer goose was occasionally seen—hot outbursts of imprisoned vapours coming from the decaying vegetation of the waste and rising in a pillar-like cloud sudden as smoke from a gun—the peewit was shrieking about him, the grouse were rising occasionally in a flutter from near his feet. He felt it as a remarkable calm on such high ground, and an unwelcome one. On he leaped, and he gradually became aware, young and strong as he was, that this unaccustomed exercise was telling upon him.

He sat down on a large boulder, very hot and weary, for he had been leaping and occasionally slipping into the stream some three or four hours.

He started again, and getting on solid

mountain turf he struck away from the beck. Gradually he became aware of a change in the atmosphere. It seemed to him that from the hills, on right, left, and rear, the air was falling upon him. Presently it became quite a strong current lifting him forward. Pressing forward, the weight of air, ever increasing behind, he ascended a gentle slope and then, as if a curtain had been suddenly drawn, a magnificent prospect opened before him. The wind was now so strong that he involuntarily sat down. There at his feet lay a vast cleft. It was as if he sat on the prow of some huge shell of a stranded ship, looking down its strong ribbed sides and along its keel, to the distant place where some Titanic power had knocked off the stern and allowed him, through the opening, to see the far off landscape ; Appleby with its castle and church in the foreground, and heaving upland, losing itself in the misty hills, shading into space.

Some broken rocks piled up together in the curving hollow at his feet made him fancy it was like a cable chain lying heaped together in the hold. It was Dovedale,

famous for its geological peculiarities. He wended his way joyfully down the ravine by a sheep track, and entered Appleby at sunset.

He did not care to linger in towns, and he was early on his way over the high desolate moors of Shapfell, keeping to the unenclosed wastes as much as possible, and feeling a strange sensation as he saw large sheets of water disclose on right and left, gleaming sometimes beautifully blue as he resolutely pressed westwards towards the great mountain which was a landmark all around. He had got glimpses of Hawes Waters on his right, Rydal Water, Grassmere and Windermere on his left as he descended by the side of Helvellyn and came on Thirlmere.

Sleeping at a little hostelry, he took the causeway dividing Thirlmere, scaled the hills above, and towards afternoon he stood on a ledge of rock that broke sheer away from his feet, and he almost trembled at the abruptness and magnificence of the view. At his feet lay Borrowdale, stretching up to Styhead on his left, a little to his right was Derwent Water in a glorious blaze with the declining

sun, and bounded by the Cal Bells and Skiddaw beyond. Keswick lay at the further right, and in front Scafell and the Screes of Wast Water lay in shadow on his left.

What a peaceful place that valley looked, the farmers, and peasants busy turning their hay, the sweet smell of which he could fancy came up to the precipice on which he stood.

He descended the slope and found himself passing a vast stone that in some primeval day had rolled down from the hill above, and bounded along until its course had been stayed where he saw it. He pushed up the valley, wondering at the hills on each side and before him, until he came to Rosthwaite, and made his way from the little hamlet up a slope to where there were hay makers busy in fields that fronted a weather-grey stone house, low roofed and flagged, having in front a stone porch, benched on each side of the door it screened.

A hale, healthy looking man, iron-grey, with the stubble of a week's beard on his chin, was giving the hay makers beer from a stone ware bottle as Willy came up. He noticed Willy's wistful look, and invited him to partake. As

he drank, the hay makers, male and female, drew round the dispenser of beer. A dark-eyed beauty, with a fair face, full of dimples and curves as she laughed, was amongst the girls and women of all ages that came up. She seemed on the point of making a little rustic sport of him, but drew back as if some other feeling or thought had taken its place. Willy said he would have taken a rake and earned his beer, only he had walked all day from Thirlmere, and had further to go. The dark-eyed girl said he looked tired. Could they tell him if he could get a job at hay making and smith work at Morrison's, beginning to-morrow morning?

"Why, lad, this is Morrison's, an' I'm Mathah Morrison. Can' thou fettle a cart, lad, or a plew?"

Willy said he could if they had a forge anywhere near.

"Come thee into t' hoose."

A clean floor, a large chimney, old oak furniture, bright brass candlesticks, a delph rack full of bright pink ware, and a large number of hams and flitches of bacon hung over head, indicated substantial comfort, as

did the snowy cap, stuff gown, and authoritative air of the old dame, who was knitting before the fire, on which the kettle was singing. The elderly man commenced business at once without heeding the old wife. He wanted a man, he said, to help in the hayfield for a week or two; and then there was a deal of smith work needed in "fettleing up;" that would take all his time till they cut their "wots an' whe-at. Could he de-ah that?" Willy could if tools and forge were good. Then came the bargaining for wages, and the old man seemed to wish to be fair, offering what men on the moors had told him he would get, but Willy thought well to stickle for more. He gave in, however, when the farmer intimated that "If he wanted him as a smith all the year round, he would give him what he asked; but, as smith and farm labourer, he was'nt worth it." Then Willy engaged to work during harvest at Hope Farm on the statesman's terms.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A FAREWELL TO HOME.

JIM SMITH did not find a short cut, on a royal road, to the Royal Navy. He found himself towards evening, when he was solacing himself in a road-side inn, confronted with a constable, who was rather more solicitous about his antecedents than was agreeable, and more acute in weighing the probabilities of Jim's ready-made story, than was convenient. The result was hand-cuffs and free lodgings for the night.

On the way to the lock-up, he whispered to the constable, "If yo'll let me goo, aw'll tell yo of a chap that wor worse'n me." The wily detective heard his story, but did not let him go. He told him, however, enough about Willy's personal appearance and time of flight to set the sleuth-hounds of the law upon his track, and had it not been for Mary Heap's disguise, and the solitary paths which he traversed, he certainly would not have

found his way to Hope Farm. But, though they missed their victim, they kept up the pursuit after they might have resigned it as hopeless.

When Jim was lodged in the cells of the New Bailey, he found that he was not alone. There were, in fact, many of the rioters waiting a preliminary examination before the magistrates. Mr. Swain, from Stretton, was there with his puckered, yellow face, quite prepared to be of use to the executive—for a consideration. Jabez Knight, Charles Watson, and other Stretton worthies were there, reflecting on their exploits. John Pilkington and Robert Kay from Rochwood; W. Bradbury and R. Ramsden from Heydale, and several from Middlewood. Jim found himself in the same cell, with a young man of the name of Heap, whose parents lived on the moors. Jim inquired very earnestly, of such prisoners as he got speech with, if Squire Baron was caught, or Ned Lodge, or the little man he had known under the name of Ward; but none of these worthies had been put under lock and key. He thought it strange. He began to call to mind the whisperings




and doubts he had heard, and the more he called to mind, the more he came to the conclusion that they were true. No sense of intense abhorrence came out in his mind, as in that of others, as a precipitate of all his conflicting reasonings and speculations. He rather began to think that they were clever fellows, who had saved themselves at the expense of others. He pondered deeply how he should follow in their track, and earn their reward. And he came to the conclusion that he would worm out of his fellow prisoners all they knew, and then offer himself as King's evidence. He began to talk commiseratingly to some, admiringly to others, sympathetically to all, in order to get at more facts about themselves and men he thought were not in custody. He had the freer scope for this line of action, inasmuch as the solitary system of imprisonment was then unknown. Three others were in the same cell with him. Many more exercised in the same yard with them, and, hence, communication was not at all difficult. When he thought he had got enough information to commend himself to the prosecution, he contrived to open negotia-

tions with them. But, alas! he found himself forestalled. They had so many informers that they were rather embarrassed with them than otherwise, and Jim had nothing special to tell, except about Bracken Farm and Willy Greenhalgh. Nevertheless, the former information was doubly welcome. It gave the police two cases; one an excise case for illicit distillation, with the sweet prospect of fines and largess; the other a case for rioting—the more popular case of the hour.

Abel Haig was not long before he received a visit, but, used to living in peril, he had grown prudent and wary, and the very night on which Jim and Willy left him he had sent off his son Seth—these children of free trade were fond of Bible names—to a friend in the forest of Rossandale, and had spent the hours of darkness in burying on the moor his still and the evidence of his furtive occupation and gains. The result was rather to discredit Jim Smith's veracity. The only thing which confirmed it was the underground room, which was otherwise much as they had left it. But many little things which he had wormed out of his fellow-

prisoners led to discoveries of evidence against them, and apprehensions of other rioters; and the result to Jim was that he was allowed to have his wish, and was put on board H.M.S. "Hector," at Liverpool, and never came to trial at all. The more upright, but mistaken men found themselves remanded, and many were months in prison before being brought to trial at all. Tom Heron had been much struck by the complete disappearance of Squire Baron. For ten entire weeks he never heard one word of his whereabouts, and, although he often went to see old Betty, with whom he was a favourite, he could learn nothing, for Betty had nothing to tell. But one September evening, when he passed, he looked in, and thought that his presence made the old woman uncomfortable. His suspicions were aroused, but, as his chief desire was to serve her, he did not care to do anything which might give her trouble. The fact was that Squire had stolen in the night before, having been engaged in his own nefarious calling in the Leeds district since he disappeared. At that moment he was hiding up stairs, and Betty had a very clear



idea of what would happen if the pair met ; and with a woman's prudence and a mother's feelings, passed the matter off as well as she could. It struck Tom that his best plan was to go away as if he suspected nothing, and keep an eye on the house. Something told him that Squire would not linger there a single night longer after he had heard his voice. When Tom had fairly got off the premises Squire came down stairs and sat beside his mother. He was unusually gentle and kindly. He seemed as if he wanted to talk to his mother about old times when his father was alive, and the brothers and sisters were all young and at home together.

"Mother," he said—we translate—"don't you remember the time when you used to go out nursing to get us more meat and clothes?"

The old woman remembered well. She had nursed in Manchester, Rochwood, and amongst "the quality" in several places near.

"You remember nursing old Mrs. Mercer, don't you?"

Yes, she remembered that, and a long, bad bout it was.

"Don't you remember what she was called before she married Mercer, the stonemason? Wasn't it Mollis?"

"No. It warn't that. It was summut like it."

"Ah. Well. It doesn't much matter, but I thought it was Mollis."

"No," said the old woman, "it was Morrison."

"Ah. Well. It's pretty much th' same." And Squire went on talking about other people as if he were only talking for the sake of recalling bygone persons and things. He mentioned many of the work people, and gradually led up to it again.

"Yes, old Mrs. Mercer were uncommon proud. She wasn't like other working folk. She never seemed like folk of these parts."

"No. She came from Cumberland, Borrow—summut, she couldn't gradeley tell, but it's name was welly like that."

"Barrowd'l," suggested Squire."

"Aye, that wor it. They were proud folk up theer, living on their own lond."

Squire worked off this ground and talked on about the folks around. Wondered how

Andrew Heron was, and Alf Swires, and all th' folk that were in th' riot. His mother talked freely, and unconsciously gave him much information. Somehow her heart was in a relenting mood as if she should never see him again, and would have no dark up-braidings for unkindly thoughts towards him. He went to the door and looked out on the darkening landscape. He listened with practised acuteness; but detected neither wandering foot nor whispering voice. Nature seemed in one great sweet hush as it so often is on a very balmy evening in early September. Only the cooler breath of the night seemed to say that the summer was disappearing. He sat down again talking of Swain and Knight, and other Stretton people that had got into trouble. Then he went to the door, and, cautiously opening it, uttered an off-hand "good neet," without looking at his mother—earnestly looking towards him—and was gone. He passed lightly behind the cottage hugging the wall, and then the low hedge that continued a space beyond. He was just thinking that he had got as secretly away from the cottage as he had got to it;

only a gnawing, undefined dread was upon him with the dark image of Tom Heron in the background, when he heard a quick, light step from behind. The bully was the first part of Squire's nature which asserted itself from the instincts of long practice.

"What'n yo following me for? I'll pounce thee yed, if—"

"Eh!"

The voice was enough. Squire scampered for very life without having the presence of mind to see where he was going. He ran straight forward—anywhere so that he might escape that terrible arm, and that awful stick which he had tasted before. It was nearly dark. Their figures were almost like leaden ones on a background of lead, and sound was the guide of the latter man as fright was the pilot of the former. Squire had taken his way across the moor, and he was just beginning to gain sufficient glimmerings of memory and reason to recall to mind the fact that somewhere thereabouts was a fall like a sunk fence with very soft marshy ground below, when he felt, as it were, the earth giving way beneath his feet,

and became conscious of flying down into a thick watery substance with a tremendous flop. A round laughter behind him was the first indication to himself that he was not killed outright. But his returning senses told him he was in an evil plight. He had swallowed, in his open-mouthed terror, something very nauseous. His arms were impeded with long rush-like grasses. His feet could gain no solid ground to rest upon, but sank deeper at every effort to stand, or slipped so that he rolled into the bog that threatened to give him a yielding grave and finish his heroic career then and there. He saw a face looking peering down from whence he fell—a terrible face, but better that face than the prison of mud. It might have pity behind it, and the bog had none. It could not mock him more than this dreadful marsh which yielded to every effort of hand and foot as he tried to lay hold on something to help him out.

“Oh! Tom, awm dreawndin.”

“Nay, lad, thah’ll niver dreawnd. Ther’s summut else for thee.”

“Oh! Tom, help me eawt; an’ aw’ll niver—”



Whether it was the mud or the lie that stuck in Squire's throat was not quite clear.

"Ay, lad, thah'll niver do owt good if thah can turn a penny wi' being a westril."

A tremendous plunge with a sort of thick splashy sound unlike that of water. Tom grew alarmed, thinking that the wretch was sinking helplessly into the slough.

"Aw munna look on an do nowt," he said to himself, "or it'll be murder; but that muck, if it did fill his leeing throat, might save some poor chaps fro jail or a tow band. He should twist hissen theer aw reet, if aw could see gradeley how things are, an' he could see my stick. But aw munna be in at murder."

And he began to descend cautiously to get at the struggling wretch. Low despairing groans, and something like fragments of blasphemous prayers directed Tom round the lip of the marsh to where the dastard was struggling in its very heart.

"If it wor ony leet," Tom said to himself, "aw could tell if he wor near th' hole at th' middle, an', if he worn't, aw'd leet my pipe an' watch him a gay bit."

There was a great flounder and a despairing kind of sob as if it were nearly all over with Squire.

"By th' mass," said Tom, "he's gotten near 't. Howd on, lad, an aw'll help thee."

Squire answered with an imploring cry. Tom felt his way cautiously into the bog, and his eyes getting more accustomed to the gloom, soon saw a little spit of roots of marsh plants—he knew the place well—and treading on these was at last able to reach with his stick to Squire, who grasped it as only drowning men can. Tom drew him slowly to himself, and then lifting him up in his arms carried him out, and dropped him on the spongy ground as if he were a toad. Squire did not seem to want him to see his face. Tom turned him over to look at him.

"Thah's had enuf this toime, or aw'd gie thee summut for theesel wi' my stick. Thah'd get off loike other spies, or awd drag thee by th' scruf o' thee neck to jail mysen neaw. Andrah saw thee rioting an' rowing at Chadwick Fowt. An' awm pretty sure it wor

thee that cut his arm, an' that should be suffering in th' New Bailey now loike better fellys."

Tom lighted his pipe and sat looking at him convinced he was not much the worse for the souse beyond his fright, which he meant to prolong.

"Aw mun think on't whether aw gie thee owt for theesen. Mebby thah'll be cooming here agen if aw doon't."

"Nay, aw wonna," murmured Squire with his face in the rushes.

"Andrah," said Tom, "ses yo mun bless yore enemies. But what blessing 'll do thee only good, if there's no stick in 't?"

Squire groaned, but did not attempt to stir, and Tom smoked on.

Presently the moon began to rise, and, when its light began to tell, Tom knocked out the ashes of his pipe and pocketed it. Rising, he coolly made a diagnosis of Squire's condition, which he found to be what he expected—much mud, that matted his hair liquid flat, much fright, and nothing worse.

"It's neaw toime we parted," said Tom, dragging him to his feet. "Now get thee off,

an' if iver thah thinks o' coming this way, think on Tom that kicked thee behint."

So saying, he administered a sound kick, which sent him limping forward and rubbing the sensitive part backward.

Tom turned homewards with a light heart. Occasionally, for some few days afterwards, it did flit across his mind that some sort of trouble would be the result of this *rencontre*, but he did not fret himself much about it, although he felt sure it would come in a way that was "out of his line."

As for Squire, he was more frightened and insulted, if he had been capable of such a feeling, than hurt. He had sore bones notwithstanding. Whither should he go? was one of the first questions he asked himself. Home? Not there. His conscience told him he had no right by his mother's side; he would go forward and get back to Ned, who was fretting at Leeds for the very information he had obtained at such cost. By slow journeys he found himself there in three days.

Ned laughed at his adventures, just as he had done at Ward's, but he immediately knit his brows in thought.

"I wish we could get that Tom Heron indicted for something," he said, and he thought long about it.

At last he inquired—

"Has he been favouring any of the rioters? Did he help any of them to escape? Squire, you and Ward must work this out."

It was a congenial task for both, but they felt very doubtful of getting any evidence.

"And now," he said, "we must send the magistrates at Keswick word about this lad, and have him sent up to the New Bailey at Manchester forthwith."

## CHAPTER VII.

### WHAT SHALL I DO ?

MR. DIGBY considered seriously after the death of Amos Saynor, and after the excitement began to tone down, what he ought to do to counteract the efforts of plotters and informers in those early stages when it was possible to combat them successfully. He knew his clerical brethren, as a rule, would disapprove of the step which he thought it right to take, and he felt that he could not take it without some sort of sanction from Mr. Evans. He did not feel to have much fear of opposition in this quarter, but he considered it right to have a candid understanding with his Rector—when he had had one with himself

“ Shall I join their Hampden Clubs and go lecturing up and down as they want me? ‘It’s unclerical,’ say some; ‘it’s low,’ say others; ‘it’s disloyal,’ says a third party; and ‘it’s seditious’ says a fourth. It may

be all these, if acted upon in one way, and the reverse if carried out in another. Cannot we with well-doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men? Cannot we so conduct the teaching of political knowledge that we shall strengthen all that is good in these humble inquirers after better things? Is it not, where there are such strong currents of feeling and opinion, our duty to do something to guide them, and not to leave them, like untamed horses, to the whip and rein of evil men that will drive them to their own mischievous goals? Politics trench on morals, morals on religion. Has not the time come when the clergy, with their wider culture and greater historic knowledge, should do something to moderate this vehemence and direct this inquiry? Yes," he said, as he sat at his study window with his wife, looking out on the hills now growing purple with the heather bloom, "there is a great chance for a healer and a teacher, and I must be both or nothing. We must try to drag the poor lads out of the lion's jaws into which they have so blindly got, and, when we have recovered them, we must try to rub the jail tarnish off

their characters and out of their recollections. Yes, I'll try it, and, if they will not listen to me, I can but fail in attempting to remedy an evil that lay at my door."

The resolution once formed, Monsell stepped over to the Rectory and delivered his soul to Mr. Evans.

"Well, Mr. Digby, I'm an old man, and this is work which I cannot undertake, and, consequently, if you leave me, cannot carry on. The chances are a thousand to one against my getting another Curate who will or can take your place; hence, as good may be done in this way, and much harm if there is a lack of prudence, I do not withhold my countenance. Only let it be done as a personal matter of your own, in which, as long as you can help to prevent any more such sad catastrophes as we have had, you have my sympathy and support."

Monsell considered this generous treatment on the old Rector's part, and went at once to ask Sam Bamber and Andrew Heron to propose him as a member of the Middlewood Club.

Great was the astonishment when some of



the extremists heard of it, for, although they had heard enough of the Radical Curate, they instinctively felt that they had got a heavy opponent now on their path. It became doubly plain, after he had delivered a lecture or two on "The Past and Present of the House of Commons," that he was no destructionist; and, worse than that, it became plain, as soon as certain inquirers had asked a few questions and got them answered—posers which they never expected a parson to dispose of in the style in which Monsell did it—that some of their hard-shell followers were becoming quite shaky, whilst others deserted them at once. Gradually the disciples of violence and revolution—with the Chadwick Fold shot, the New Bailey jail, and Monsell's readings from history—grew into disfavour, and more rational modes of remedying the evils in representation and in trade began to be quietly discussed on the principles of patient inquiry and resolute attempts, by peaceful means, to rectify the wrong.


This was all that Monsell set before himself. He did not care to carry war into the Tory quarters, or put everybody into his own

political lathe and turn them all out alike. He did not care to teach these excited folks that they had got every side of the truth all to themselves; but he did care to make them feel that they had his sympathy, and, in every good word and work, they should have his support. . He did care to treat them as persons wishing at once to be just and obtain justice, and the result was that he made an impatient, restive people law-abiding when they would be law-repealing, and he raised them to a higher political, and in many cases to a higher moral and religious level. Digby used to say in after days, as he looked back upon that troubled, agitated season, that it reminded him of a snowstorm. You gazed out with your mental eye on those fierce opinions whirling one within another, words, thoughts, coming down as it were from the heaven of high dreams, wandering aimless in mid-air, cycling to right and left, whirling round this and round that human flake, giddy with the wind of passion, and forming ever new combinations with this and that in the descent, each individual tossing and twisting so that you could not follow it—the whole

a perplexing medley as the air filled with dancing, fleecy motes—until at last, while you gazed, the air cleared, and the white mantle on the ground was the resultant ready for its work, calm and still. For the present he was a snow-flake amid snow-flakes, whirling with them in the mad mental dance, and for awhile he seemed as if he and other snow-flakes moved in and out within each other's orbits so rapidly that memory had not time to record the courses and combinations made. He was continually lecturing or visiting the clubs at Rochwood, Roydale, and further out. He was catching individual men and arguing with them. He was referee of facts and reference library for information upon disputed points. He was travelling agent for all of them up and down within a possible radius. He became committeeman on several of their committees, his appointment fiercely opposed at first, then grudgingly endured by the minority, and at last cordially acknowledged. All this work, combined with his clerical duties and preparation for the pulpit—which fell more and more to his lot as Mr. Evans' confidence and respect grew—made his life

very, very busy. But this was not all. There was one kind of work during those exciting months which bowed the hearts of the district as the trees are bowed by the wind. He never relaxed in accumulating evidence for the defence of the poor lads and men who were languishing in prison. Facts were gathered to prove how they had been misled by spies; how certain of the imprisoned were not there; how others had no part in the violence; and how the worst men—like Squire Baron, Ned Lodge, Ward, and Smith—had become the informers against their victims and were getting off scot free. Money was gathered for the defence, legal advice was obtained, and preparation made for taking advantage of every legal flaw in the indictments, for every personal defect in the character of the witnesses, and for every objectionable person put into the jury-box if any packing should be attempted. All this so filled up the hours, that the “sweaty haste did make the night joint-labourer with the day,” and scarce allowed Monsell to “divide the Sunday from the week.” Yes, the snow-storm was on, and the poor clerical flake had

a very dizzying time of it; but it held to "the law of its being," and the tempest seemed to moderate to Monsell's heart even when approaching the climax. Opposition died out; co-operation began and grew; respect deepened into affection, and affection fruited into many forms of trust. Strong men gathered closer, like Andrew Heron, who never forgot that generous sermon; like Sam Bamber, who saw another bring a support to his own principles which he could not supply himself, and never expected from any one else; from mothers, sisters, sweethearts, who worked with might and main to accumulate rebutting evidence, often enough with bewildering result, as they let their imaginations distort the facts, but none the less with right good will; from fathers, husbands and brothers, who declared "th' Kewritt wor reet, and they'd uphod him through thick an' thin;" from pitying hearts that had suffered damage like the Ashtons and the Hartleys, but who thought, if they could rely upon no further outbreak, that punishment enough had been administered at the battle of Chadwick Fold; from men like Tom Heron, Alf



Swires, and Simon Shaw, who felt that in him they had found the truest defender of their conduct. Yes, the hearts of men were all bending one way, as bend the frothing crests of the waves before the scudding winds, and the sense of sympathy divided the load and leavened the spirit with the assurance of a harvest not altogether barren.

But while this was the general aspect of the greater life of the district, minor events were interlacing themselves with the major matters.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### LOTHARIO.

THE military had only been withdrawn to Manchester a week, when Lieutenant Chetwynd came riding alone through Chadwick Fold. He called at the Mellers ostensibly to thank them, and leave a little present as a recognition of their kindness to himself when a guest under their roof. Mrs. Meller thought it very kind, but did not see much call for it, inasmuch as Captain Butler, at parting, insisted upon paying them handsomely for all they had done. But Mary, in her innocence of life, was pleased with the attention, and Maggie was rapturous, and ogled her thanks in a way the officer could not mistake. But he came again, and then Mary felt her native modesty taking alarm. He came a third time, and unfortunately he met her on her way up the hill to old Betty Baron's, whom every one pitied and most people helped. The Lieutenant was gushing,

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and leaped at once from his horse to salute her. Mary pushed on with a distant nod. The Lieutenant interposed—

“Now, do not, Miss Meller. Don’t run away in that way. You have no idea how much I am honoured by being allowed to speak to you. Do stay, I pray.”

Mary pushed on, beginning to look offended.

“Now did ever such a beautiful girl behave so wilfully to a poor fellow that adores her?”

Mary’s fine tall form seemed to fill with indignation as she pushed on, and he still confronted.

“Now, my beauty, do not look like that to a man that thinks the world of you. Surely you will not go without saying a word?”

“Let me be,” said Mary, getting agitated, and trying to push past him.

“Now, there’s a dear,” he said, throwing his arm round her waist, and trying to hold her.

Mary screamed, and he let her go, observing an old woman peering over the wall behind the girl. Mary ran for dear life up to Betty’s cottage close at hand, and nearly



fainted when she got inside with fright and reaction of spirits.

"Deary me," exclaimed old Betty, "what-iver's to do wi' th' lass?" But she was ready with sympathy and such little offices as she thought necessary, and soon had gathered from Mary her story. Betty was indignant, and vowed that, notwithstanding his fine regimentals, if he came near enough to her bedroom window she'd send a pail of suds upon him he wouldna like. After awhile, when she thought Mary's aunoyer would be out of the way, she locked her cottage door and started with her home.

Betty observed two things as they descended the hill. First, a picturesque smash of half-a-dozen eggs making a beautiful compost with some tea and sugar scattered on the road. Mary shook her head in a sickly way as she looked at it, and said, "It was for you, Betty." Secondly, the back of a figure disappearing across the fields.

"My auld een are different to what they've been," said Betty to herself, "but that's auld Sally Swires, Alf Swires' aunt, if I'm a woman."

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Arthur Meller was terribly wroth when he heard from Mary what had happened. On the other hand, Maggie moved about the house with a smug, self-satisfied look, which showed itself in an occasional side-glance of triumph at her sister. Mary did not know whether to tell what had occurred to Alf or not. She feared his violent anger, if he believed her, would get him into some great scrape, and his jealousy, if he did not, would recoil upon herself. After much reflection and some tearful hours, during which she moved about the house like a listless, noiseless ghost walking in pain, she resolved to tell him all. But to her astonishment he did not come at the accustomed time. Two days passed over and he did not appear. Then Mary felt assured that something was wrong, and instinctively she turned to Arthur. She bade him see Alfred and inquire if he was ill. Arthur went willingly enough, but with a bitter spirit. He thought if Alf had heard anything that it ought to have brought him in double quick time rather than have kept him away. Alf was cool when they met, but he promised when Arthur asked, with some

pique, if he meant to see his sister again, that he would come that evening. He kept his word, but his manner froze the poor nervous girl, until she trembled with an undefined apprehension of coming evil.

"Oh! Alf, what is it?" at last she exclaimed, bursting into a flood of tears. Her grief touched the young man's heart, and he told her what he had heard about her and the officer—they had met by appointment, and they had been very endearing together. The girl fainted at the accusation. When she came to she saw him standing over her with water in hand, and a moist something in his eye, which gave her hope and courage in telling all. He did not seem to disbelieve her, but the shadow of a reserve remained after all explanations were made, which was as wormwood to the high spirit of the ingenuous girl.

"Go, Alf, to old Betty, and ask her what she saw spilled in the road, and what she saw in me when I staggered to her house?"

He seemed to be reassured, but his parting kiss was colder than usual instead of warmer, as it should have been.

He saw Betty, who was loud in her denunciations of Chetwynd, and eloquent in her threats of what she would do with dirty water when he gave her the chance.

“Aw rekkon, Mither Alf, yer auld aunt has put her spoon i’ this dish. Gan yer ways. Mary Meller is a good lass, an’ yer aunt’s a lee-er.”

Alf left her. Great love breeds great jealousies ; and he murmured to himself—

“My aunt says she saw it all. Betty cannot say as much. True, my aunt is cracky at full moon, but it is not that now ; true she hates the Mellers, but nothing special has occurred lately to arouse it afresh. She would scarcely invent all that she says, and I’m afraid there is something in it. For how could he know when to meet her ? She means no harm, and is, perhaps, alarmed at the extent to which it has gone, but she has listened so far as to allow him to get speech with her.”

And the young man brooded over it until the green-eyed monster got a hold of his mind and he grew bitter of heart. He did not neglect to come and see her. Mere defiance

of the eternal jangle at home against the Mellers by his father and aunt was enough to keep him true to the understood times when he should appear at Mary's house, but it was with an air of constraint which made the girl, after he was gone, turn her head and weep. Mary was very shy of leaving her home for a considerable time after her meeting with Chetwynd.

Maggie often rallied her about her "moping." Her mother, ignorant of what had occurred, did something like it in her own way, and urged her to go out into the fields and woods before the winter was upon them. But for some weeks it was of no avail, and the paling cheek and drooping gait told of a sorrow sapping the young spirit, a canker in the bud of the young hopes, that Mary's appearance contrasted very sadly with Maggie's, who had grown so radiant as almost to have exchanged the native saffron of her cheeks for maiden pink. She was gayer with ribbons and little trinkets than ever, and once or twice, when she was incautious in her rustic display of these things, she had caught her mother's eye

upon her with a strange doubtful look of inquiry. She was caught often reading letters, but no one ever saw the postman bring one to the door.

One day Maggie suggested that they should go and visit a friend at a farm some two miles away before the October days were gone and the miserable Lancashire November set in. Mrs. Meller backed the suggestion, and Mary agreed on the understanding, as she thought, that Maggie would accompany her. Arthur objected to Mary going without him, but her mother over-ruled it, saying the weather was lovely, and as Arthur must take the place of his father, who was unwell, it was hard upon the girls to bind them by his engagements.

Maggie seemed exceedingly well pleased with this arrangement, and soon after put on her bonnet and went out in the gayest of good humours.

On the following day, which was one of those parting smiles of receding summer that have a strange fascination for every nature with a trace of poetry in it, the two girls started to walk to Brent Farm. Maggie

was all life and fun. She seemed as if the whole stock of her amiabilities had been taken out to air for Mary's good. And so for half a mile beyond the village they chatted and talked, Mary gradually, by the infection of Maggie's high spirits, regaining a portion of her older gaiety.

They had arrived at a point in the road where two or three cottages were seen at the distance of a few rods across a little garth. Maggie suddenly bade her sister go on and not wait for her, while she ran across the little croft to one of the houses. Mary, used to Maggie's sudden whims, thought nothing of it, and went on in increasing good humour, the sweet invigorating air carrying an inflatus with it that gave to her step the old elasticity and her pale cheek a tinge of the old rosy hue. She went on a while wondering how it was that Maggie did not come, and she made up her mind that, when she got to the bend of the road before her, she would turn back, if she did not meet her sister at that point, coming by the straight cut across the fields from the cottages to the high way.

A little while before this an old woman

might have been seen running with all the speed she could down the fields, and breaking through the hedges where she could not get over them, until spent and breathless she arrived at the dye works and motioned rather than asked for Arthur.


"Sharp—Arty—up yon," pointing with her finger whence she had come. "Tak yer stick."

Arthur comprehended at once, seized a huge oak cudgel, and set off up the hill, a black passion gathering in his face.

"Th' young maister's put eawt," said old Simon Shaw. "Someb'dy owt to goo efther him. Bill," he said, turning to a stalwart son of his, "tak a good stick an' follow sharp."

Bill belonged to the order of young fellows who like a little diversion to break in upon the routine of life, and don't fret much about what it may lead to ; and as a result he was very filial in attending to old Simon's admonition.

In the meantime Mary had gone on towards the limit of her walk where the road abruptly turned and descended very rapidly. It fell away so rapidly that a tall man could sta





few feet from the crest of the highway and not be seen by one ascending on the other side. The ground of the field adjacent overhung it, and bushes drooped down so that anyone retiring but a step behind one of these was completely hidden.

Mary got to the ridge of the road, looked at the landscape below with a momentary feeling of delight, descended a few yards to look for Maggie and lo ! Chetwynd stood before her. The girl stood looking at him for a moment with parted lips and frightened eyes, literally in a voiceless scream.

"My darling Mary, I've waited for this, oh so long," and he came towards her with open arms. She instantly turned to flee. He confronted her at once to prevent it, and seized hold of her with endearing terms. She struggled hard to be free, but her strength was not what it once was after those weeks of sapping suffering. "Oh ! why drive me mad, Mary, with being so cruel. I love you."

"Then let me be," pleaded Mary, still struggling. "We don't deserve this at your hands."

"Now, dearest, don't be so hard with one. I love you more than anything on earth. Come, now, be reasonable, Mary," he exclaimed, panting with the struggling which had now gone on some time. "Come," and he passed his arm round her waist and drew her towards the bushes.

She looked half fainting with terror and breathlessness, uttering low cries, but as she felt her strength going she uttered one loud prolonged wailing shriek and sank down.

Chetwynd was in the act of stooping over her when the bushes above parted, and a crashing blow came down on his head, and a man leaped bodily upon him bearing him senseless to the ground. It was Arthur Meller, who had crossed the fields, and, guided by the voices and the last cry, had come silently on the soft grass above directly to the place where they were. He rushed to his sister, who was laid panting with her eyes half open, and no signs of recognition in them.

"Oh! she's dying, she's dying," he groaned, as he lifted her head and hung over her in despairing helplessness. He thought of

water, but there was none at first sight near, and he dared not leave her near that—

Presently he bethought him of a little tiny rill near at hand, a few yards below. He leaped over Chetwynd's body—he was laid bleeding from the head, breathing stertorously, his cap rolled away, his handsome undress uniform stained with mud—and brought as much as his two hands could hold and threw it in her face.

She moved, opened her eyes in a vacant way, slowly gaining consciousness, terror gathering at the sight of a human form.

"Let me be, let me be," she murmured.. "Mother, mother. Get away, get away," she cried, looking wildly at Arthur, and pushing with her hand. But a prolonged look at last showed she was coming to.

"Arty? Oh, Arty, save me, save me."

And she threw her arms round his neck with one long, convulsive clasp, as if all she sought had been suddenly found.

"Well awm blowed!"

The voice came from the place where Arthur had leaped down. A prolonged whistle followed the voice, and Arthur saw

peering down, his eyes open until they looked a most outrageous size. It was Bill Shaw, with a big stick in his hand. Bill looked at the two prostrate figures and Arthur, but seemed to have lost the power of moving.

"I ham blowed," he said again, and seemed uncertain what to do.

"Help us, Bill."

Bill leaped down at once and helped Arthur to lift Mary up. She seemed to be only able to half comprehend what had occurred, and clung to her brother at once in childish trust and childish fear, her arms about his neck. He led her gently away, putting the brow of the hill betwixt them and the sight he did not wish her to see.

"Bill, look after him."

Bill turned to go, but as he looked from the crest he called back to Arthur—

"Whoi he's gotten a hoss at th' bottom o' th' brow."

"Throw him across it, Bill, an' send 'em both to owd Scrat."

He was leading her gently down the hill, his right arm round her waist supporting her, and his left hand holding hers. He wanted

to get her home as fast as he could, and her steps were necessarily slow and feeble. In a little while they met Maggie walking very slowly. Maggie seemed surprised to see them.

"What's th' matter?" she said.

Arthur told her.

"Surely you haven't hurt *him*?" was the unaccountable exclamation.

"Yah," said Arthur, looking keenly at her; "he'll want no moer for a gay bit."

"Aw'll goo an' see," said Maggie, pushing past.

"Nay, wench, thah shanna."

Arthur seemed to have enough to do supporting one sister and struggling with another; but he was a strong young man, and one burden was ceasing to embarrass him.

Indignation, in fact, was giving Mary back her strength, and she left hold of Arthur to leave him free to deal with Maggie. Maggie then felt a grasp on her arm that stilled her with the sense of helplessness, and she could only whimper that "they had been behaving badly to Chetwynd, and bad would come of it."

In this way they descended the hill, Mary walking alone with a stiffer back than usual, and Arthur leading Maggie by the arm.

Had Mary known that her dress behind from nape to heel was one mass of wet mud-diness she might have walked with a spine less rigid; but greater matters excluded the less.

They had got half way down the hill when they met old Betty—the only person whom they had as yet encountered—out of breath with hurry.

“Ay, my goodness, what an’ ye been doing? But come yer ways,” she continued, without waiting for an answer; “an’ tidy yersel, Mary, at my house.”

Mary gave a sudden twist to look at herself all round, and then went scarlet.

A little footpath led across to Betty’s cottage on another road. Arthur, on the way, explained to Betty the result of his meeting with Chetwynd.

“Weary wark, weary wark; but come yer ways, Mary, aw’ll dee to protect ye.”

And the old woman pressed rapidly on, and soon unlocked the cottage door.

Maggie sat down in a corner like a state prisoner, sulky and grand, while Betty set to work with the sister's raiment.

"Hadn't you, Betty, better come with me when you've helped Molly"—Molly was his affectionate name for his sister, who smiled in recognition of it—"an' see what can be done for that man."

"Naw theyn' nohn ketch me doctoring him."

Betty was a great doctor for cuts and bruises, and turned many an honest penny that way.

"Nawe gowd wonna tak Betty theer."

"Then I must go without gold."

There was great hubbub at this. Mary, as he rose to go, seized him with quite a strong air, her fine tall figure posing with her frenzied energy in a way that might have stirred Chetwynd's feelings deeper than they had been yet—if in any noble sense they had been stirred at all.

Betty flew to the door and locked it, while Maggie attempted to interfere, saying that Arthur "ought to go and see whether he had committed murder or no."

"Well," he said, "he can seek me out when he's better—aw reckon he's not up to much just now—and then we can have it out."

A tear stood in Mary's eye as she heard this, for it boded real, if undefined, trouble yet to come.

They stayed a considerable time with old Betty. She affected to be keeping them locked up until all danger was passed, and only allowed them to go when she thought "aw wor reet."

They descended the hill, Maggie making all sorts of spiteful remarks about people causing other people's deaths with their "skrikes and their pretences," and more and more writing an indelible impression on Mary's and her brother's mind. Soon after they got home Bill Shaw turned up. "How had he managed?"

"Ou, aye, aw reet. He laid a lang toime an' then he oppen'd his eyne an' wanted a drink, an' aw gav him't. Then he rubbed his yed, and axed war he wor. Then he seemed moidered a gay bit, an' aw rubbed him an' gav him wayter. Then he geyt weel, an' aw



helped him a hossback, an' he gav meh this" —showing a bright gold guinea — "an' walked off. He didna trot nor gallop. Ay, but Arty, mon, yo han gien him't."

A few days after that word came that an officer had been set upon near Chadwick Fold and murderously ill-used. The newspaper said that "plunder had evidently been the object of the miscreant or miscreants, but that at present nothing reliable could be learnt, as the Lieutenant was confused in mind when he entered the barracks, and had been delirious ever since. Our readers will remember that Chadwick Fold was the scene of the late deplorable riots, and very probably one of the quondam rioters or more had tracked the officer to the place where the attack occurred—a very lonely and likely spot."

This was disquieting. It was much more so when a mysterious hint from a friendly source came to Arthur bidding him fly at once, ere the vengeance of Chetwynd's powerful relatives and friends fell upon him. He went into hiding in the safest place he could think of. He disguised himself and

took lodgings in Manchester, working as an operative at the Old Garret dye-works.

Mary's troubles were by no means over. Hints were passing, how propagated she could not tell, of the incident, which were by no means to her entire credit. She had met the officer by appointment, had encouraged him, had turned round upon him when her brother got angry, &c.

Aunt Swires heard all these calumnies and took care that her brother should know them, and the pair managed that at every meal the subject came up in the most annoying manner to Alf. He fumed and they only laughed, but if this had been all it would have been well. He was mystified. His knowledge of life, learnt amid the unvaried incidents of a farm, did not fit him to unravel such a tangled skein. He thought that there must be some fire where there was so much smoke, and half believed that Mary—his beloved Mary—had been infected with the “scarlet fever,” and had been indiscreet. He grew cooler, but he did not break off paying his visits, yet he never left the house but Mary drooped her head and sat for long

afterwards dropping slow, silent tears. She protested her innocence. He did not disbelieve. He simply could not understand. "How was it that when she was in some lonely place Chetwynd was ready in the loneliest spot to meet her?" Mary could answer this question no more than Alf himself, and the result was that suspicion, like a riving wedge, came between them. She was utterly miserable, and would gladly have died. He was not at peace. Apart from the inner struggles which tormented him all day long, and sometimes far into the night, his aunt and father were gibing and sneering on every occasion. At last he vowed that, if he heard one word more he would leave home. The threat was received by his father with a laugh and the very next meal—it was at supper time—the taunts and insinuations were bitterer than ever.

Next morning Alf packed up a little wallet, took a kindly farewell of Mary—it partook more of a brother's adieux than a lover's—and presented himself before his cousin, who was a seedsman in Cannon Street, Manchester, and asked a hospitality

and permission to serve him, which were answered by the offer of a home. They had been at school together, and great friends there, and Ebenezer Norris had boasted to many of his friends of his plucky cousin, Alfred Swires, the hero of Chadwick Fold—a boast which made many desirous to see him, and, seen, to become his companions and friends.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE CASTAWAY.

It is the evening of a fine August day. His Majesty's ship "Hector" has been fretting against the North Sea waves for some hours, running along the bare, hard stony outline of the Norwegian coast. They are nearer now, and officers and men can descry the little wooden houses painted white, or yellow, or brown, and the quaintly steepled wooden churches, painted stone-colour or buff, and picked out with lines of white or black, their *flèches*, now and then, flashing metallic lustres as from founts of light. The distance-formed haze has disappeared, and the declining June is turning the iron-bound coast into a grand mine of golden beauty, lighting up little crevices of green amid the hard-featured brown uplands, which promise so little of agricultural wealth to the busy toilers of that frugal and virtuous land. The keen, sailor-eye notes that,

wherever a tiny patch of green appears, the dim shadow of a sombre log house may be traced on its face; wherever a rocky spit, or low stretch of sandy or stony islet, crops up, man has seized the vantage and toiled to wring a few ears of barley from the niggard soil. The sun strikes level on the seaward mall of the distant hills, and those arm-like stretches of island rock which trend north and south, and are just seen running parallel with the coast—shutting in the sea between mighty banks and reducing its ocean pride to river rank and calm—these take on their saffron flanks a deeper gold. There is a solemn hush, such as comes involuntarily at grand sunsets or the turn of mighty tides, and each expresses his thoughts in religious whispers as become men standing in a mighty temple wherein the spirit palpably feels, like a second Isaiah, that the Lord's train fills it, sitting on His throne, and earth is catching the glow of His cherubim's wings. A sombre pine wood on the mainland is putting a smile on its grim countenance. Norwegian smacks, with their red-brown sails, flit and glow hither and thither in the saffron

light. The wash of the waves comes up as a solemn undertone, like the distant hymns of nuns unseen at vesper prayer and praise ; men lean against mast, and bulwark, and rope, hearing the voices of home, "still small voices," soft gentle memories that come from mothers and sisters, wives and sweethearts, or the sweet prattling lispers they left with a kiss and a dropping tear in their cots months ago. The spirit of discipline takes on a tender look, and officer and bo'sen seem to linger gently where the evening spell found them, caring not to give voice in those sharp percussive tones of command which carry so much of the rattle of steel and shot in their breath, and blow the meshes of sentiment into evanishing shreds.

In that sublime hush two sailors are leaning against one of the great guns, and talking in the same subdued voice as others.

"Well, messmate, and when did you last see her?"

"Nobbut three weeks afore th' riot, an' hoo was gradely weel then. Squire's left her aw've yerd sin', but owd Betty 'll nohn doo

badly. Hoo's a wench wi' lots o' spunk i' her."

"Shiver my timbers, but that she is. Did she never get anything I sent her these last five years?"

"Aw conna tell, but aw knew Squire's often had lots o' brass to spend on us at Swain's hush shop, i' top o' th' Stretton Moor."

The tar seemed troubled, and sighed, but his companion appeared to be looking out on the distant landscape now glowing more beautiful than ever, and saw not the one nor heard the other.

"By th' mass, that be-ats th' Know Hill, an' Tandle Hill, aye, an Blackst'n Edge as weel. It's grond."

But he was not a gentleman who felt any of the subtler intuitions of beauty. It was only the expressive radiancy that took his momentary attention.

"Han yo been onywheer as grond as this?"

"Yes, along the Australian and Pacific Islands, and up and down both sides of the New World."



"Ay, what trav'ler! Hast' seen ony feighting?"

"Lots on the big lakes of Canada and up the Potomac. I was at the burning of Washington—a nasty disgraceful business. Our Captain said so. I was in one of the frigate actions.

"An' which won?"

"Neither. We blew into each other till we were both of us knocked into match wood nearly, and then night separated us."

"Sal *we* ha' ony feighting?"

"Fighting! No. Who is there to fight?"

"Ay, but awm glad o' that. Yo'n knaw aw wanted to be yer to see forrin seets, nowt else."

"No doubt. But tell me if you were ever in old Betty's cottage?"

"Ou, ay, aw've been theer. Squire geet howd o' me to show me that theer'd niver be ony good done till we'n burnt a lot o' mills deawn."

"Did she look as if she had plenty to eat, and coals for winter? Was she comfortably clothed? Did she look happy?"

"Weel, aw didn't bother mysen wi' that

mak o' thing. A mon thinks nowt ov an auld woman. Aw wor busy seeing Squire's bull pup, an' yering what he'd to say consarning burning mills."

The sailor looked askance at his companion with a contemptuous eye, and continued—

"So you did try that on, and burnt your fingers over it—the only things you did burn?"

"Weel, yo see, we'n thowt we had 'em safe, an' we could ketch 'em on th' sly; but somehow they'd gotten to knaw aforehand. An' Tom Heron, an' Alf Swires, an' a lot moor, wor reddy for us, an' we git leathered weel."

"How is Tom Heron, and Andrew his brother, &c.?"

So the men talked, and the golden light faded away into twilight, the long bars of burnished yellow, which linger so long in a Norwegian sunset, disappearing before the deep purple haze that fell like a divine dust over the land they had been silently nearing. A sudden wind sprang up, and a pilot boat, with its deep, red coloured sail and clean pitch pine tinted sides, came suddenly upon them,

and, in attempting to wear, collided with the big man-of-war and capsized, its one daring occupant disappearing beneath the waves.

“Quick, messmate, bring a rope’s end and throw it to me.”

The sailor leaped overboard into the water growing black beneath the darkening skies and the shadow of the ship and swam round the boat to see for some signs of its late owner. Presently he discovered something rising a few strokes off, and, swimming thither, found it was the pilot, much stunned with the heavy concussion.

The sailor—let us call him by his name Alick Baron—dragged him to the upturned boat, and both held on, drifting before a strong current towards a spit of sand. The “Hector” could be only dimly discerned now far away, a phantom ship revealed by taking her in between the eye and a long thin pencil of mirking light, the last glimmer of the evening. They looked out for the boat, which they felt sure that their Captain would send, and one of his officers would command. They saw the flash of oars once or twice as that boat rose on the freshening waves. They

shouted, but the winds were against them; and, as if everything were unpropitious, the current took them one way, and the boat veered another. The result was that, after a long search, Lieutenant Selby reluctantly concluded that Alick Baron had found a sailor's grave.

Jim Smith was not one of the volunteers that sprang into the boat, but he mourned over his lost friend, tenderly saying—

“ Ay, but he might ha' been good to me, an he lived. Awm fair sorry he's de-ad; for aw con geet nowt out on him neaw.”

And he felt that he could have performed prodigies of valour in the rescue if there had been no danger.

But there was real mourning in the little cottage by the moor when Monsell Digby came with the papers all properly signed from the Admiralty, empowering a year's pay owing to the late Alick Baron to be paid to Betty Baron, his mother and sole legatee.

But Alick, with his companion, had held on through the weary moments as the night grew darker and stormier, and the boat drifted slowly down to the sand spit which had ceased

to be visible. It seemed to be an eternity even to these hardy children of the sea ere the dragging sail and its little down-turned mast touched the ground, and showed that the water was shallowing.

At length the boat stood still, and the sound of little breakers close at hand made Alick resolve to swim and prospect what sort of a night's lodging was possible. A few dozen strokes carried him to the shore, which having touched, he immediately returned and made his companion understand where their rest was to be found. Alick soon saw that he had a man for his mate who, having gradually recovered from the stunning blow that he had received in the collision, could now assert his personality.

"Stands lig," he cried.

Alick did not know what he meant.

"Hold stille."

Alick does not understand.

"Wait," he said, as if the inspiration of an English word had come.

"It's lucky," said Alick to himself, "he can say anything in English," as his companion dived under the boat and appeared

with a rope's end and something else in his hand.

Giving the latter, a small parcel of sail cloth, to Alick, he motioned that they should start for shore. They soon landed, and together, with the line which the pilot had held, drew the boat nearer to the ere of sand and heaped-up boulders on which they had set foot, and made it fast for the night.

One thought seemed present in both their minds—was there any inhabitant or house on the island? They both started to grope their way in the dim light over the stones and the inequalities of the ground. No light, no house, no animal, nor man nor woman, was met with. They retraced their steps and sat down together, seeing each other's heads only as round shadows with indefinite outlines. The pilot opened the sail cloth, took something out, and uttered the word "Speise," following it up again with the English word "eat." Alick was fain to do so. The gnawings of hunger had already set in. He found it was a salt fish boiled, which his companion had given him. He had necessarily swallowed some sea water in his battling with the waves,

and he was growing very thirsty. The fish did not make matters better ; yet there was nothing else for it but to eat, and sleep if he could in his dripping wet garments. The twain lay down on some dry sand. Until his eyes were sealed in deep unconsciousness one thought only seemed to have a firm grip of his mind. No young girl, told of some handsome, unknown lover that was on his way to see her, ever disturbed herself more than Alick did himself with the question, " Whatever is this man like whom I have rescued and brought hither ? "

The sleep of the labouring man is sweet, and the slumber of the weary is often deep. Alick slept for most part of the night in dreamless quiet. The sense of cold on one side awoke him, and he found his companion close on the other, or probably he would have been aroused before. Then lighter slumbers succeeded, and busy dreams. Visions of the old moor and the cottage ; himself and Squire, and their sisters at play ; the old schoolmaster and the wild delight when they bounded into the street after school ; boyish pranks and boyish escapes ; his dreams were

all of home, and in the background of them was a comfortable feeling that he was in a happy home, recalling for pleasure his youthful past.

He stared when, in the early twilight, a strange face appeared bending over him, after shaking him awake. It pointed to the east and the coming morning. Where was he? The strange face uttered strange words—words not heard from such a face at Chadwick Fold. Was he on board the “Hector?” Ah! he had bethought himself. He was a castaway, and this was his acquaintance picked up with descending night and the black swirl of big waves about them. The man had a broad, honest face, blue eyes, and lightish hair. He pointed to the boat safely moored, and to a long low stretch of land a mile or two away. Then he set to work to collect dry sticks and wreck, struck a light from the iron on his boot with a flint, and soon had a fire on which he threw a meagre quantity of salt fish.

Alick discovered that his companion had often piloted English vessels up the coast to the North, and could speak a few words of



the Imperial tongue. As soon as they had swallowed their few mouthfuls of warm food they set to work to get their boat righted—a long, weary business, but successfully accomplished at last. Towards noon they were discovered by a man who had come down to the end of the island, and who waved something on a stick.

In an hour or two a boat appeared, rowed by two men, who brought milk and bread and fish, and manfully set to work to rig up their boat, while Alick and his companion ate. It was evident to Alick that the pilot was no stranger in these parts. He nodded to the men, and spoke as one that had seen them before. As soon as they had finished their meal the whole four got into one boat and towed the other.

In a while they came to a little hamlet—a few gaily coloured log houses, with a church that was gayest of all—and landed. They were shown into a little cabin with a large fir bough at the door by way of mat, and a floor strewn with fir needles and films by way of carpet. In one corner was a kind of lidless box which turned out to be a bed, and in the

other was a female, having the same general clay-brown aspect which the floor and timbers of the shanty had, and who turned out to be the lady of the house.

The pilot soon made friends with her, and it was clear to Alick that they had fallen among a simple but kind-hearted people. Every want was supplied, as far as they were able; and in a homely, simple way they seemed to do all they could for their comfort.

Alick, as he noticed one after another of the natives, kept saying to himself, "Where have I seen these folks before?" And, at last, it occurred to him that they were the faces of the country people which he had seen on the moors and farms in North Lancashire and Yorkshire. The same homely manners, the same honest look, the same turns of voice, the same words at times like "Yah, luck;" similar words to his own for bread, milk, tea, coffee, sugar, pepper, salt, ale, egg, knife, fork, plate, paper, brother, &c.; all seemed to make him feel that he was among a kindred race possessing the best attributes of his own.

They were weather-bound here for several

days. There is no city without its cemetery, said the old world. There is no seclusion without its sorrows. A fine young man was dying, who had been shattered against the rocks in a recent storm, and he passed away while they were there. An interment without a religious service seemed strange to Alick, especially when he learnt that it would take place a week after the grave was filled up. But there was one sight which he never forgot. Passing through the hamlet one day he met a man whose awful palor was something which he had never seen equalled. A deep sore was in his cheek, a great weakness appeared in the whole of his frame. The poor creature seemed to shun observation, and had a something about him which Alick had never seen in any one before. It was a leper—a victim of the hard life and hard fare which has made leprosy the bane of the land and the dreadful entail of some of its population. It gave Alick the creeps, and he never wished after that to linger longer than necessary in their present harbour of refuge.

He urged Carl Christophersen, his friend the pilot, with whom he had now found a

way of conversing, to depart at the first opportunity, which they did, and made for Aalesund, up the coast. Here Carl had his home, and here they thought it probable that they should pick up the "Hector," but she had gone North to Trondhjem.

Carl made him stay with him a little while, and having to go North soon, it seemed a good opportunity of rejoining the man-of-war.

One fine Sunday morning, when the sun was shining grandly, and people were leaving the church, they stood out of the bay. It was a charming sight to gaze upon that scene, the harbour seemingly formed by some hand that had cut a deep curve out of the rock; and the children on the hill above, in their red and brown frocks, and the home-going worshippers, looking down upon the boat leaving the bay, and between them and the water the gaily-painted wooden houses, clothing the slope in picturesque confusion. They stood up to Trondhjem, with its Domkirke rising like a giant above the wooden warehouses and dwellings, but the "Hector" had gone. They sailed up the great river-

like fiord, over which so many famous Norsemen and Vikings before them, from Harold Harfaagr downwards, had gone—the river-like sea arm, which opened up so coyly here and there, showing some watery gateway leading up into the country for vast distances, and everywhere revealing a continuous rural population, with harvest in full operation. They passed cosy Hommelvigen on their right, and pushed on to Levanger. Then they slowly returned down the coast to Aalesund. Alick found not, on his return, any signs of the “Hector,” or any British ship which could take him home. There was only one chance, and that was to sail down by Bergen to Christiania, but Carl opposed this, and persuaded Alick to stay with him during the winter, which he was willing to do, when it became plain that every chance of rejoining the service was shut off for the present.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE GOOD OLD TIMES.

HOPE FARM lay off the bridle-track or occupation road, which, in those early days of the century, did duty as "the King's highway" for Borrowdale. It was rather a secluded farm, not coming so low down towards the bottom of the valley as many others did, and extending high up among the fells. The house was on a gentle swell of ground, which was hidden from the horseman or sportsman making his way by the side of the brook below by another larger heave of rock or earth, that acted as a good screen against certain inclement winds. There were trees and thickets on the western side, and a clear view down towards Derwent Water on the east.

As Willy, after a dreamless night's rest, stood in the early morning light, and watched the golden tinge on the tops of Skiddaw, the Catbells, and Castle Crag close at hand, he could not help feeling that it was a glorious

home, with its delicious air perfumed at this moment by the breath of the hay in the field below, and some sweet briar close at his side in the little rustic garden plot on the west of the house—a glorious home in which to spend a rustic life, a glorious refuge against a tyrannical world's care, or—the constable. He was not left long alone gazing outside on the mountains with saffron crest or cap of mist; others, of both sexes, soon passed by him, but their looks, after greeting him, were towards heaven rather than earth, and that, not in sun-worship, but in weather-inquiry. The black-eyed girl, with the dimples vibrating merrily over her face as she displayed the ivory guards of the tongue, came out with the rest and passed into the hayfield. Soon, in the merry row, they were turning over the scented spoil, and leavening labour with rustic jest or gossip. They could see their fellow dalesmen and women along the valley bottom, on the richer ground, and up the slopes of the hill opposite, busy, like themselves, and a sense of a community of interests and a brotherhood of labour seemed to sweeten the mood in which they spoke

of their neighbour's prospects, as well as their own.

Used to toil in the hot shop, with the clatter of hammer or iron in the ear, the dark, leaden-colour of the shed, or the fierce light of the forge in the eye, and the fiery air on the dust-laden cloud seething the lungs, it was a thrilling workshop, that grand embower of mountains, the quick wine of the atmosphere, and the fragrant material they worked up with its soft rustling sound, musical as a woman's dress.

He felt strong with those late wanderings, in which he had endured small hardship, and drank in much romantic luxury in sight and sound, paying his frugal way, and suffering no want of food. Little wonder that he worked with a will until old Morrison's eyes sparkled with pleasure.

The black-eyed girl contrived to work near him, and trudged along as if she was going to show him the way, and stoutly she did it; but she worked the laughter out of herself—a thing you would have thought impossible had you seen her habitual looks—and quietly fell behind, sobering in manner, and



casting furtive glances the way he went. Yes, it was a glorious place was this, Willy thought, and he wondered what human consideration there could be in the whole world who could ever have tempted his grandmother to leave it.

They left the field about eight o'clock for breakfast—the porridge of his own Lancashire, only dingier in colour and more flavoured with the husk than he had seen at home. The milk was good, but the bread was a novelty, and of deep mouse colour, and innocent of the elevating tendencies of any kind of barm—sad as sad could be.

Well, it did not matter; these were bits of drawbacks, but what of that? Had he not the refuge, the beauty of the mountains, the valley and lake—the fastness of the hills and gorges into which he could retire in case of pursuit; the companionship of his fellow-workers, and the merry laughter of these girls. Yes, he would take things as they came, and not fret.

In such a mood he was walking soberly to the field, when a sportive damsel ran behind with a whisp of hay, passed it with one hand

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round his back, and met it in front with the other, inclosing him in a ring. Willy thought it meant a petition for a kiss, and was graciously pleased to grant the boon, but discovered, from the general tittering and the damsel's confusion, that he had made a mistake.

They worked on until about eleven o'clock amid a running stream of banter and rustic sarcasm. When the "lowance" came, then a little respite, and work until noon; dinner, afternoon toil, "lowance" again; toil until evening, supper and bed. So the first few days sped, Willy taking kindly to it as the necessary labour of a pressing period. Some things, however, did astonish him.

At noon, on his first day of labour, he observed a man chopping fiercely at something. The sparks flew, and Willy, wondering if he were cutting iron with steel, moved to the spot where the man worked. He was cutting up the cheese for dinner! It happened to be a cheese that was own cousin to the one which rolled from a cart on a road above some heather, and struck so many sparks, as it bounded from crag to crag, that

it fired the heather, and there was a conflagration lasting for three entire weeks. A fact!

The man looked up at Willy.

"It's rare stuff, mun," he said, touching the rind with the axe head, "to mak carkers on for thee clogs. It'll deu as weel as flint for a goon."

When Willy's teeth made its acquaintance he found it as hard as buckhorn, and he nearly broke a tooth in the conflict. But the principle that tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, qualified the teeth, either with Borrowdale hardihood or Borrowdale prudence for the cheese, and Willy never feared breaking another tooth over it.

In three or four days the hay was mostly out of hand, to old Morrison's great delight. He seemed to stand and watch the hay-makers with gloating eyes which rested chiefly on Willy, whose example and prowess, strung up to the quick energetic life of manufacturing districts, the old man rightly concluded had infected the slow foot and hand of the sleepy dalesmen.

"There's been nowt kin to thee i' Houpp Farm, lad, for mony a day."

Such was the old man's judgment on Willy, and the old woman echoed the sentiment—

“Let's see what thoo can deu i' smithing a Mundy.”

But it was not to be. On Saturday the dairy maid discovered that the milk would not churn. On Sunday morning early a sod or two were brought from Crossthwaite, the churchyard of the parish, and placed in the cowhouse. Still, on Monday morning, the milk would not churn. It was stirred with a branch of the rowan tree. Actually after these two potent specifics had been applied to the milk, the obdurate sceptical milk refused to churn!

“Aw should say,” exclaimed Willy, “that th' cows wor badly.”

“Nowt o' t' sooart, lad. Nowt o' t' sooart,” replied the thoughtful old man. “They're witched, mun. An' iver sin auld Ailie Biggins deed, we've had lots o' trouble. We mun leet t' Need foire.”

Thereupon it was announced that to-morrow, at twelve o'clock, it would be lighted, and all the neighbours must be informed

instantly of the approaching ceremony. Willy, with the rest of the men servants, was sent over the moors and through the neighbouring valleys to warn everyone whose cattle were afflicted with the distemper to come to the ceremony.

On the following day, with much importance, amid a crowd of rough, wild, unkempt looking dalesmen—men who seemed eager and ready, like competitors at a foot race, toe to the scratch, and eye on the starter—stood forth, the old man in the presence of the children of his people. A great pile of heather, ling, and other easily lighted substances was stretching across the path up to the house beside the cowshed. The cattle had been brought outside, and were in charge of two or three men armed with stout sticks and whips. Matthew produced two pieces of dry wood, and having gazed carefully at the piled brushwood to see all was right, commenced, amid breathless attention, to rub the two sticks briskly together. In a while there was smoke, then fire, then a blaze, which, amid a great murmur, was put to the brushwood. Instantly a conflagration

shot up, and, as quickly, each eager rustic clutched from the blazing heap a brand and ran off with it, keeping the sacred fire alight by one device or another until he got to his own distant holding. When Mr. Morrison gave the signal for his men to drive the cattle through the fire there were none else present but Willy and his own people. They drove them through and back again, and the ordinance of the day seemed at an end, when a breathless, panting dalesman appeared and requested that the sacred fire might not go out.

“What is ’t Tummus?”

The man explained that his cows were wrong, and that he wanted to put them through the fire.

“Ther er foive, and t’ dame. Ay, it’s a rare foire,” he exclaimed as he saw the vast clouds of smoke—a good portent—which they had caused by throwing on green material. Presently a small procession appeared with the matron behind.

“Tummus, thoo’ll nut send Jinny through?”

“Aye, that I will. There’s been nowt

but bad luck i' our house, an' we'll cure it all  
whoile we er about it."

The women of the Morrison household looked on in stupid wonder, unable to say no or yes. The men servants seemed no better. A superstitious awe, a sort of faint reflection of what must have been in the hearts of the onlooking crowd in olden time when, to assuage public calamities, a king offered his beautiful young boy to his deity, or when apostate Israelitish kings made their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to—

Molock, horrid King, besmeared with blood  
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;  
Though for the noise of drums and timbrels loud  
Their children's cries unheard, that pass through fire  
To his grim idol.

With a movement of his hand the man made her tread through the black mass of smoke coming from the green withes. Apparently she took little harm, and saw no great cruelty in it, for she smiled a wifely smile when the man patted her on the shoulder, saying—

"We'se be all reet now, Jinny, be-asts an' fowks, be-asts an' fowks."

Nobody seemed to look on with approval. A something in the hearts of the girls struggled with the superstition in which they were bred, telling them that they and cattle were different, and this could do human beings no good. It was but a short step to the further conclusion that it could do neither cattle, milk, nor cheese any good whatever.

On the following morning Willy rigged up the forge and worked away with might and main. A turn at his old craft came with an inspiration like a breath from the sea. Old Morrison hung about him nearly the whole day, spending his time betwixt Willy and a dozen people finishing the last field—the five acre—and fettleing up the stacks. But Willy got most of his company, for his style of doing his work—rough work, as the cart tires, ploughs, and chains were—was something different to what he had witnessed in the itinerant jobbing smiths, and thieving tinkers who penetrated into the valley. The good man found himself speculating on the advisability of mending his neighbour's iron work for a consideration when he saw how much Willy



had disposed of during the day. The men, when the master disappeared, came up furtively to hang on, wondering at what they saw, and once, when they had fled at the possibility of their master's advent, the dimple-faced girl made an errand with a little dainty something which she had made unknown to her grandmother under her very nose. The brown hands trembled a little, and the fair face looked subdued as she handed in her offering, and then quickly withdrew not daring to look at the wonderful something which she came to see.

The evening of the second day saw the whole broken iron work pieced together and repaired, and old Morrison was there designedly at the finish, for he had got a request or a demand to make. Willy guessed what it was, and thought it better to anticipate it. Pulling his grandmother's ring from his pocket—a plain, broad, gold ring with some little love tokens about it—he said, with an innocent air, in answer to the old man's praises—

“You see, maister, we can mend rough things like that,” pointing to a pair of

hames just repaired, "but we conna mend this mak o' thing."

"Eh? let me see, lad. Why, it's gowd!"

"Yah," said Willy, as the old man looked at it wistfully, strange memories doubtlessly coming back over forgotten years.

"Tell me, lad, wheear this cam from?"

"My granny," said Willy, looking at him closely.

"I could ha' been as sure as Jack Robinson," he seemed to be saying to himself, "it was our Molly's. And this"—raising his head and looking full in Willy's face—"this was yer granny's?"

"Yah," quite innocently.

"Is she living now?"

"Canna say. Hoo wor nohn so weel when we parted a bit sin. Hoos a good granny."

"What's she loike?"

"Oh! she's a grond face wi' a hawk nose, and lots o' white hure (hair). Granny's more like a grond lady than poor fowk."

"What was thee grand-father's name, lad?"

"Mercer. John Mercer, a sto-en mason, i' Heydale, near Manchester."

The old man rose with a saddened expression, and left Willy standing looking after him, as he walked wearily away—very wearily compared with his usual vigorous gait—taking the ring with him.

Willy “knocked off” work, and went to his supper. Then strolled down towards the little village of Seatotler, wishing to keep out of the way of old Morrison during the evening, and feeling some early words of his grandmother coming home “with power” to his memory. It was a glorious sundown as he left the little hamlet behind, and pressed on in the growing dusk to “the fraternal four, that make one solemn and capacious grove”—the grand Borrowdale Yews. Here, underneath their thick and solemn shade, his grandmother, as a girl, had played, and while youth, strength, and beauty had changed to old age and infirmity, these sombre monarchs had lived changeless in appearance as the everlasting hills around.

Huge trunks ! and each particular trunk a growth  
Of intertwisted fibres, serpentine,  
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved,  
Nor uniformed with phantasy and looks  
That threaten the profane : a pillar'd shade,

Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,  
By sheddings from the pining unbrage tinged  
Perennially—beneath whose sable roof  
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose deck'd  
With unrejoicing berries,—ghastly shapes  
May meet at noontide—Death the Skeleton,  
And Time the Shadow—there to celebrate,  
As in a natural temple, scattered o'er  
With altars undisturb'd of mossy stone,  
United worship; or in mute repose  
To lie, and listen to the mountain-flood  
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

He gazed on them in the glooming light, with something of that stilling awe which the old Druid might have felt, or the old Greek full of the pulsing sense of the nearness of wood-god and satyr. “Yes,” he murmured, unconsciously to himself, “sixty years ago they stood hand in hand—that old man and my old grandmother, as little boy and girl—where I am standing now; and these looked just the same, while they have blanched and bowed beneath the foot of time. And their forbears before them did doubtlessly the same, and these black green lords of many days still wore the same look as now. And here, fifty years ago, John Mercer used to meet her on summer evenings like this, and talk their love talk, frowned upon, not by Glaramara

or the Great Gable opposite, but by the pride of the old grey weathered house of the Morrison's up there."

He entered the grove. The gloom was astonishing, "A little later" he said to himself, "I might rub clothes with anyone, and not be able to say who they were, or what they were like."

It was pleasant to the feet, that carpet of soft "red-brown sheddings," the films from the pining monarch's mane. He sat down on the mossy stone and pondered in the deep seclusion on his own lot, and what it might be, now that his grandfather knew who the farm servant and smith was. But he started after awhile, thinking that he heard a breathing. There was no doubt about it. Feet were moving over the rich thick carpet in an almost noiseless way. A low, cackling kind of laugh, as of some mischievous lass and her lad, who had been interrupted in their billing and cooing, and were now adroitly escaping. Who could they be? Willy was quick to follow in the direction from where the sound came, but he discovered no one. He got outside as soon as he could. Still no

one. He walked round "the grove," but nothing could he see. He felt that there was mystery, and, the truth must be told, he was not poet enough to wish to go into the gloom again and nurse the delicious sense of awe, feed on the nearness of the incomprehensible, touch hands with the Spirit World, hear the unearthly whisper, unfold in soul-vision the formless power which unseals the well-springs of being.

Willy, in fact, wanted to get away as if he were retreating from the unhallowed ridicule of Dryad laughter. It was scarcely cowardice that infected him. It was more the sense of helplessness whilst within it. When he got outside, and caught, after much scrutiny, the heads of a couple occasionally bobbing above a distant wall, he had thoughts not akin to fear, but very germane to his own particular position.

Next morning old Morrison gave him back the ring. He was very thoughtful, and seemed anxious for conversation without talking. He would have been glad if any one would have told him all he wanted to know without his appearing to ask for it. He

asked Willy how many brothers and sisters he had, and seemed surprised that there was only a sister beside himself, but why he should look surprised did not seem clear. He asked Willy to tell him all about his family, but he only answered his questions. What was his grandfather Mercer like? Willy had never seen him. He was killed long before he himself was born. Grandfather Morrison seemed to give a great sigh of relief, talked of his sister and their early life at home there; inquired of her daughter, Willy's mother; the husband she had got, and, without saying anything definite in his hard Cumberland caution, left him without giving him any idea of any sort whether his position would be that of a member of the family, or smith and field labourer to Hope Farm in general, and Matthew Morrison in particular. The old woman he noticed looked during the next few days at him with a hard, inquiring look, which had nothing of the touch of kinship about it, but much of the speculating question, "How shall we get on *now*?" But somehow or other, Esther Tyson, the black-eyed, round-faced granddaughter got

hold of the secret, and it soon travelled to her sister Kitty and her brother Geordie. A kindlier manner softened into their intercourse with him, and the old folks, still wary, did not seem to interpose to check it. The fact was they felt that a "masterly inaction" was their cue for the present, and they were at a loss to understand why the young man, clever as he was, had travelled in their direction. They had heard of criminals that had sought refuge in their sequestered dales—the Maid of Buttermere's lover, for example—nay, they had seen some, and the constables after them, and they should like to know something more about the cause of Willy's coming before they gave him welcome as a kinsman. The barley harvest would soon be on, and a little smithwork for a fortnight after that, and then they would require his services, no longer as an extra hand.

"Tell me, lad, what brought thee to Houpp Farm?" said Matthew to Willy, about the third day after their conversation.

Willy made a clean breast of it.

"Then that's whoi thou deed thee hair. It were dark brown, now it's leet."



Willy told the story of the dyeing. Still the old man was not satisfied.

“Thoo’s stown nowt from ony body?”

“No, nothing.”

“Thou’s le-am’d nobody?”

Neither hurt nor slain anyone that he knew of.

“Thou’s ony been i’ a bit iv a scraffie?”

That was all, and granny wished him to come here till it was all blown over.

“Weel, rekk’ning thoo’s telling us trewth, thou may bide wi’ us as lang as thoo likes.”

Thus the bargain was struck, and Willy agreed to do any smith work for any friend of the family living near or far away, provided that they brought it to the smithy, which he had now got into very good order.

Henceforth Willy was one of the family; he could get off work for a little rustic junketting with the neighbours as easily and more so than either Kitty or Geordie, a fine, stout, Cumberland lad, of eighteen. In fact, he could get off easier—the smith work being an infallible passport to Grandfather Morrison’s heart—and these two young folks turned to him whenever they wanted to get away to

a fair, a sale, or a merry-making in honour of the hay harvest.

"Hang it," said the old man one day to his wife, "there's moor on us than afooar, and that lad's a nice canny lad; but ther's less fun an' life in t' house. Esther's quiet, and mopes, and 's nowt like hersel."

Betty said nothing, for the simple reason that she knew too much about it. Certainly everyone observed that the lighter Willy's hair grew the quieter the dark-eyed girl became.

Willy, and Kitty, and Geordie agreed one day to go down to Grange, the old monkish granary near Derwent Water, to the autumnal fair, and this time they were successful in persuading Esther to go with them. They set off, a merry, light-hearted party, full of jokes, running down the hills and leaping over the walls for very excess of life.

Willy helped Esther over the brook, and he noticed that her hand trembled in his; but with girlish pride she kept bravery in her eye.

At the entrance of the fair Willy observed a fine-looking woman with a suggestion of

the shrew in her face, standing with a halter round her neck, and some salesmen looking on with a sheepish look of disapproval. Her husband had brought her for sale—they had settled mutually, no doubt, on this form of divorce, which required no intervention of the House of Lords, with a little bill of ten thousand pounds for costs—and the faithful partner “for better for worse, for richer for poorer,” &c., offered the whole lot for one shilling. She was ultimately sold for a pint of ale, a gallant wight near Styhead becoming the lucky purchaser, who dared to run the risk of hearing her voice in the lone dwelling supplementing the howlings of the mountain storms rather than shudder alone in single blessedness.

They loitered among the gingerbread stalls; gazed at the rich array of smock frocks and carter’s whips on sale; heard the eloquence of Cheap John, and laughed at his quips and cranks; and dallied with the brace of girls over the baskets of tapes, the stalls, and the little booths where ribbons and other female requisites were to be obtained for current coin.

Esther and Kitty were somewhat astonished at the amount of money inadvertently displayed when Willy bought them what they considered quite a royal "fairing." But they were the more astonished when they remembered that as yet he had been paid no wages. And in the scarcity of money in their experience—albeit they were wealthy in possessing and enjoying the ordinary comforts of the dale above most of their fellows—they thought that his parents must be well-to-do in that manufacturing district whence he had come. So the hours wore on. Willy was in the highest condition of enjoyment, and Esther was exchanging her shyness for something like suave happiness, pricked out with little ebullitions of her native mirth, when he became aware that two pairs of eyes were upon him from the other side of a small crowd. One pair plainly belonged to a constable, and the other—

"By th' mass! it's Squire!" he exclaimed.

But he had long been prepared for this occurrence, and whispered to Geordie—

"Say nowt to nob'dy, tell no stranger

where yo come fro, and meet me at th' old yew trees when it's dark."

He passed quickly out of the little hamlet, seized a farmer's nag that was tied to a gate, mounted, and galloped up the dale. He could see, as he looked back, that he had caused a commotion, for a number of men were standing in the road with their mouths wide open in astonishment.

The tit was a splendid goer, and Willy kept it in full gallop for some twenty minutes, dismounted, turned it back towards the village with a great frightening noise and two or three smart strokes with his stick, which sent it down the dale as fast as it came up.

Some one had raised the cry of "hoss stealer," when they saw him fairly off, and this had sent a small squadron of rustic cavalry in pursuit, who had seen themselves outstripped in the race.

"If t' chap can ride ye'll niver ketch him."

Such was the owner's despairing verdict. And pursuit turned to laughter when they came upon the horse, throwing up his heels and galloping as hard towards them as it had done in the opposite direction.

"It's kicked him off."

This promised rare fun, and some galloped a mile up the bridle road to find the body ; but they returned disappointed, yet in sufficient good humour to enjoy the whole thing as a lark, caring mighty little for the constables when Geordie had given them a hint of what it was. And their good humour was not dashed by the fact that they had recovered what they sought, while their contempt for Squire and the tipstaff was keen when they found that they had looked on the chase from a distance with helpless desire alone.

On the other hand, Willy, who had betaken himself to a recess in the hills, looked on with laughter as they scattered up the road and then came questless down it. When the shadows of the evening deepened, he moved from his hiding place and got beneath the yew trees' shade.

"Squire's eyes," said Willy to himself, as he recalled the whole scene while stealing along the flank of the hill, "didn't look altogether like a catchpoll's. They were wistful, begging, and, for a bully like him, they were conciliatory. What does it mean ? And what does he want up here out of me ? "

## CHAPTER XI.

MR. GAUTHORPE BARON.

“YOU are quite sure, Betty, that he said he would leave his money to Alick?”

Betty was weeping.

“Aye, he said it ower an’ ower, an’ he’s a man o’ his word, but vary kewrious.”

“And you are quite sure that your late husband was his nearest living relative?”

“Aye, I’m sure on’t, sir, for he said it hissel, an’ he spurred (inquired) ivery road he could to see if he could leet on another o’ th’ owd stock.”

Betty is talking, as it were through tears, of the loss of her favourite son—for whom she is wearing a decent suit of black—bringing them welling up at every mention of his name.

Ruth, her daughter, a dutiful girl, is softly moving about the room while they talk, “putting things to rights,” as the Lancashire operative class often do when

you are sitting conversing with them and they enjoy your visit.

"But does this queer relative of yours care much about the family ; so much I mean, that he will be glad of a visit from me if I have got anything to tell him ? "

"Yah, Mr. Digby, he'll be glad to see you."

"Onybody'll be that," said Ruth, ceasing rubbing the few glasses they possessed. "An' he thinks a deal about th' family, sir. He ses there's nohn a family near that can howd a cannal to't if aw were known," continued Ruth.

"Oh, indeed ! What does he say about the family ? "

"He says they've come o' great folk, an' that all th' lond round wor theirs oncet, and that theyn called Barons bekos they were real Barons an' had fellys abeaut them that wore iron an' had swords an' horses."

"I see. And Mr. Gauthorpe believes all that, does he ? "

"Yah," said Ruth, chiming in again, "an' he's gotten a crust made, an' he ses it's th' owd fam'ly crust, an' he wanted to leave it



behint him an' there's nob'dy to leave it to neaw Alick's deed, for Squire is'na worthy, an' lasses is nowt."

And Ruth fell into sadness as she retailed this mournful specimen of masculine prejudice.

"But do you think he will see me if I go?"

"Aye, Mr. Digby. He'll see you, for th' family's sake first, an' for yer ohn th' next, as iverybody likes to. But, oh! Mr. Digby, if ye can do owt wi' him, do, for I'm very useless now at nursing."

"Nonsense, Betty. You're nearly as fresh as Ruth here, and, if I catch the measels or the scarlatina from anybody, and there's a great deal of both about, why I'll send for you, Betty."

"Ay," said Betty, looking up with brightening, glistening eyes, "I'll come, if it's ony to look at you. But if I wor now what I was when I nursed auld Mary Mercer—"

"You'd do all that any woman ever did, or ever could do, Betty. I know that. Poor Mrs. Mercer," he said, musing, "she does take the absence of that lad to heart. We must pull him out of the fire if we can. But,

unfortunately, while every day that he remains uncaught increases our chances of doing it, every day that he's unheard of seems to hammer another nail into the grand old woman's coffin. Andrew Heron is a great comfort to her."

"An' so are you, Mr. Digby," exclaimed Betty.

"Well, well; but neither of us are worth one word and one look from that fair-haired young man."

"He is a plucky un," said Ruth, stopping in her dusting and sinking her voice, as if telling a great secret. "They say he fowt like the vary ——, that's what *they* say, Mr. Digby," and the girl grew confused, and blushed deeply.

"Well, what else do they say?" inquired Monsell, smiling to the very verge of laughter.

"They say, that, if they'd all had Willy's pluck, nohn on 'em could ha' held th' mill agin 'em, an' nohn of 'em but Tom Heron an' mebbly, Alf Swires, could ha' tackled him. It were good o' Tom to let him goo," she said, meditatively.

“ Oh ! then you know that Ruth ? ”

“ Yah ! Mr. Digby. Poor Mary Meller— hoo does look badly, for sure, an’ thin, an’ white as a boggart, poor wench— Mary tow’d me, an’ Alf tow’d her, afore he turned so queer wi’ her.”

“ Well, Ruth, keep all that to yourself. It’s dangerous, and we haven’t got rid of spies and informers. A man’s foes are often those of his own household in days like these.”

“ Awm sure Squire is,” replied Ruth, bitterly.

“ Well, but about the old relative. I suppose he’s got money to leave ? ”

“ Aye, Mr. Digby. There’s th’ Manor Farm ; he says it’s th’ last of a big estate, an’ he’s been allus stingy, an’ saving, an’ it’s welly sartain he’ll leave all he’s gotten to a Baron, but he’ll niver leave owt to Squire. He said that when Alick wor transported. As for th’ lasses, if they get owt they mun all be ca’d Baron, an’ it’s hard getting ’em to change a second time, when they’ve gotten fellys o’ their ohn.”

“ Well, Betty, I don’t feel quite sure about whether they will be asked to change their

names after they've got husbands. I never felt quite certain that Alick was drowned at all."

"No, you dunno say so, Mr. Digby. Sure—ly yore not joking. Aw know you dunno loike to hurt poor fowk's feelings," cried Ruth.

"Oh! Mr. Digby," exclaimed Betty, seizing his arm, "is it possible Alick's alive? You winna play wi' a mother's feelings, Mr. Digby. You had a mother yersel, an' she mun ha' been a good un to ha' such a son. But an' ye ony reason, sir, for thinking Alick's aloive?"

"I have, Betty," said Monsell, much touched at the deep family affection of these two humble friends.

"The Lord be praised!" they seemed both fervently to ejaculate together.

"Oh! what grund an' ye, Mr. Digby, to go upon?"

"This, Betty. I never believed that such a swimmer as Alick was altogether likely to be lost in one of those narrow channels, or fiords, as they call them about Norway. Then there was the boat near to him, by

which he would support himself. Then there was the man that was in it, and they are splendid fellows on the water, those Norwegian pilots. Then there was no complete search made, in my opinion. The 'Hector' shot away, and the boat's crew sent after him can never have gone near the spot in the dark, otherwise they would have come, at any rate, upon the upturned boat, which, they say, they never saw again. All these things make me believe that Alick might be alive still."

"Ah! but, Mr. Digby, he may be de—ad," said Betty, the look of hope dying out of her face.

"Well, but I wrote over to our Consul, at Christiana."

"No, yo niver did Mr. Digby?" exclaimed Ruth, brightening. "But it is loike yo."

"Yes; and he seems a good sort of a man, fit to live among such good, honest, homely folks as I know those Norwegian people to be—my father once was there—and fit to represent us to them."

"An' what does th' Council say, sir?"

"The Consul says, Betty, that an English

sailor saved the life of a Norwegian pilot off that very coast, on that very day, that Alick was said to be lost; that, after enduring some hardships, and spending the night on a rock, they received great kindness from the people of the village to which they made their way next day, and he hears the pilot took him to his own home at Aalesund, and that they afterwards went North to find the 'Hector.' They missed her, because she only stayed a day or two at Trondhjem, and he hears they have sailed up the fiord to Levanger. He says he will write to me again when he hears more. His own opinion is that Carl Christophersen will return for the winter to his home, that Alick, if it be he, will winter with him, and then that he will return to England in the spring."

"An' ye niver tow'd us all that, Mr. Digby," said old Betty, reproachfully; "an' you been writing an' spurring i' that road all this toime?"

"Well, you see, Betty, if I had told you all this soon after I formed my first opinion, and it turned out wrong, Alick would have died twice, as far as you are concerned, and

there would have been a second mourning. But, I wouldn't, Betty, have told you what I have if I had not had another letter from another gentleman, as I have this morning."

"This morning! now yer that," cried Betty, with a sort of admiring pride, "He's had another letter, Ruth! An' what does this last 'un say, Mr. Digby?"

"It is from a gentleman that saw him, Betty, an English gentleman who talked with him and who writes proudly of what an Englishman can do when he's of the right sort. He says the sailor told him that his name was Baron—"

"It's eaur Alick, mother, it is for sure."

Betty was sitting with her mouth half open, panting, her eyes glued to his face, unable to speak.

"Goo on, sir," cried Ruth.

"He says that Baron leaped out of the man-of-war, and seized the pilot and got him to shore. But the pilot says, proudly, he owes his life to Baron, who dragged him through the waters, and upheld him when he was senseless with the stunning blow which he had received in the collision, and did every-

thing he could, besides saving him, to bring him round. The people of Aalesund were quite jealous of Baron, and made much of him, and he will be much made of during the winter, if he stays there."

The tears fell quickly now from the old woman's eyes as she shook her head slowly from side to side, murmuring—

"My son, my son."

Ruth's eyes brimmed over, and Digby's did the same.

He was the first to recover.

"There must be no word of this, Betty. You must keep the secret for a little while, until I can manage to arrange to get his discharge from the Admiralty. I think I can see a way to do that, and then we'll send for him over, find something for him to do, and you'll all live comfortable together again."

"But we'n not wear black neaw," exclaimed Ruth, "when my heart's white an' leet. We'n be hipperkrites."

"I fear there are as many hypocrites in colours as in black. And, Ruth, where the heart's joyful the black won't make it mourn."



"We'll shap, sir, to get on wi' th' black."

"To be sure, Betty. If I'd been a woman, I'd have taken it off your hands. A good old aunt of mine has just died, and it would have come in useful for me. She's left me a little money, Betty, and, when Alick's discharge is obtained from the Navy, why, if you'll tell nobody, I'll buy you each a new dress, any colour you like—red, blue, grey, or all the colours of the rainbow, if you prefer it."

"Nay, we'n nohn ha' that. It mun be menseful, yo knaw, Mr. Digby."

"Right, Ruth. And now tell me how I'm to get at Mr. Gauthorpe Baron easiest?"

"Just say, sir, if he sends ye word by th' old woman that he's out, that ye ha' come to talk to him consarning th' great Baron fam'ly, an' he'll fair put ye in his pocket."

Monsell in the course of the day found himself at Manor Farm—an old kind of rough imitation of an Elizabethan mansion, reduced in size and style very much. Nevertheless, it had a character about it. The tiny wings, projecting about four feet beyond the front, and the mullioned windows, with a

stone over the door, bearing the inscriptions G. and J. B., in the form of an equilateral triangle, and suggesting a ghostly cross with the lower part of the stem unrepresented by a letter—all tended to give it character.

The owner had done his part in repairing and bringing everything more into harmony with the period, wherever a little paint, woodwork, or cleaning was needed. It was built of brick and had been painted a bright brick red. It had also the clear suggestions of a moat about it on two sides. So that, altogether, it was what Miss Wilson, the fashionable milliner of the adjoining hamlet of Tanthorpe, called, in her grand way, "a personable house." A great shaggy dog was chained in the yard, and put his chain to much peril when Monsell approached the door. An old serving man, very drabby and somewhat seedy, rebuked the dog as a prim little woman struggled with the door to open it.

"We can't serve you," she whimpered out before she looked, dreaming of beggars.

Monsell laughed as she opened the door.

"Oh! I beg pardon, sir. Did you want anybody?"

"Yes, take this card to your master."

"Master's out, sir."

"Then find him, and say I have something to tell him about the great Baron family."

The talisman acted. The little woman returned at once—

"Sorry she thought he was out," &c.

Monsell found himself ushered into a parlour that did not differ much from ordinary ones except in a curious mixture of globes, air pumps, a couple of genealogical trees of the great Baron family—old lords of Tanthorpe, and the barony of Marshlea—and a good many nondescript book, old spurs, gauntlets, bits of chain and plate armour, &c. In a little while Mr. Gauthorpe Baron entered. He was a man of about sixty, tall, thin, sallow, and consequential. He bowed with a jerk which brought prominently into view his head, bare as a billiard ball, and rising up to a glistening point at the crown. His temples were hollow, his forehead narrow above the eyes and rounding above the cavity at each side into greater breadth. His eyebrows were weak and lightish coloured, his eyes pensive, blue and dewy. His nose

was neither straight nor aquiline, but wavy, so to speak, one billow occupying the bridge and the succeeding one cut short at the point which gleamed white and bi-lobular in the cartilage. A tense muscle ran down from the junction of the nostril and the cheek outside the corners of the mouth, which themselves were drawn pensively earthwards, giving with the small chin and the thin straggling whiskers a look of melancholy meditation. It wasn't a bad face; it wasn't a heroic face. But it was a face capable of a long series of generations of fads—fads it lived for rather than found them springing like weeds out of its life. Add to all this that Mr. Gauthorpe Baron was *négligé* in his attire rather than otherwise, and you have got something of the *tout ensemble* of the man. He was a man who "sought the light," and got it through a window with many defects in the glass, which distorted the shapes of objects presented, that is, he was largely self-educated, more largely self-opinionated, and consequently often saw things in a subjective shape that tallied little with their objective

outline. His language, which he had been assiduous in cultivating, was something on a level with Andrew Heron's as regards correctness, each getting rid of much of their native *patois*, and each coming largely to grief in the matter of relative pronouns; but it differed as the men differed. Andrew's was a masculine attempt at correctness with simplicity. Mr. Gauthorpe Baron's was a feminine attempt at the superfine by mingling finicking cockneyisms, obtained in two or three visits to London, with his native Lancashire. As he let his land, which was very rich and many aced, and gave himself up to study, he was looked upon as a learned man by his neighbours. He considered himself as an antiquarian in general, and a scholar in particular. And when he broke into Tanthorpe English, he wished it to be understood that he did it as an antiquarian, and when he diluted it with cockneyisms, he wished it to be inferred that he spoke as a scholar and a gentleman—that is to the wondering rustics and little farmers around.

As singers sometimes take to the tremolo under the notion that it is pathetic and effec-

tive, Mr. Gauthorpe Baron took to aspirates under the impression that it was genteel.

"Hew wish to see me, sir?" said Mr. Baron, holding the card in his hand and looking as if he had an important part to play in making his visitor understand that he was in the presence of incarnate intellect and erudition.

"Yes, Mr. Baron, I've wished for some-time to have the honour of your acquaintance, especially as the representative of one of the old families."

"Thank you, Mr. Digby. Hi may say as my fimly is one of the holdest in these parts, going back to Robert Earl of Tanthorpe, which the Conkrer meed first Berron of Marshlea. That's his crest, sir, in the corner there," pointing to a small shield duly picked out with heraldic shapes and colours, "he was a great man."

"No doubt. And I suppose there's never been a time during these last 800 years when there hasn't been a Baron living hereabouts?"

"Never. But the greatest of fimlies, Mr. Digby, fade awee. They don't sheep for

eternity. Hi mean," he continued, feeling his language was illusive, "that they don't last for ever."

"*Sic transit gloria Mundi!* you know, Mr. Baron."

Mr. Baron looked as if he knew what it meant, but, feeling that he did not, the ideal of his own personal grandeur fell before himself, and he feared it was fallen like Dagon before his visitor.

"I think you once owned, Mr. Baron, all the land from here up to the hills," said Monsell, encouragingly, noticing his confusion.

"Yis, Mr. Digby, right hon from Roylestone to Middlewad, and Rochwad down to th' river beloo Heydel. Hi theenk you're at Middlewad, Mr. Digby?"

"I am."

"Yis, we've heard of you at Manor Farm. You must excuse a holder man than yourself, Mr. Digby. Hi'm not a dimercrat. Hi'm for the harristocracy, hinterlect, and hacres."

"So am I, Mr. Baron, in their proper place."

"No, hew don't say so?" exclaimed Mr.

Baron, growing interested. "Why, they do say as hew're quite a leveller."

"I am, Mr. Baron, of all abuses."

"Oh, that's hall!"

"Yes, you and every other gentleman will find that, in pulpit and on platform, I'll stand up for the great old families, like yours, when they stand up to their duties."

"Hi'm d'lighted to hear 't, Mr. Digby; hit does one's heart good to hear you."

"And as I said, Mr. Baron, I came over here about one very old great family—your own."

"Ah, yes," said Mr. Baron, effervescing over with a look of satisfaction, "mine's a very hold fim'ly."

"I'm waiting to know something of your collaterals, Mr. Baron. I fear much that the direct line dies out with yourself."

"Yes, hit his so," responded Mr. Baron, with a look of mournful pride. "But the kerlatrals, Mr. Digby," he continued, with a gathering gloom, "er not what hi wish. Only a westril of a half-cousin and some girls."

"Do you mind showing me on this tree



your family history for the last hundred years ?”

This was walnuts and wine to Mr. Baron, and they were soon in a long confidential relation of who married who, &c., and the whole story of one hundred years of hatched, matched, and despatched Barons, with their outside belongings.

“Then, Mr. Baron,” said Monsell, at the end of nearly an hour of family history, “old Betty’s family, in point of blood, comes closest to yourself. But I understand you that the entail has long been cut off, and the owner of the last moiety of those vast possessions, the owner in short of Manor Farm, can leave it now and to whom he will ?”

“Yis, Mr. Digby. And hits a great trouble to me. Those as wish to keep hup the hold name and find that a raggel, like Squire Baron, comes next ; those,” said the Baron, with a grand flourish, “will be the persons as can pity me. There was a son, hi thought him, Mr. Digby, a noble lad, full of the hold courage, which, Sir Gauthorpe Baron—my name, sir—showed at Hacre, under Richard, th’ lion king ; but he’s a criminal, Mr. Digby,

a criminal ! the first of his race." And something like tears stood in Mr. Baron's eyes.

"Come," said Monsell to himself, "it is, as I've been thinking all along, there's something to work upon below all this paraphernalia of pride and folly."

"You allude, Mr. Baron, to Alick Baron?"

Mr. Baron bowed his head solemnly, sadly.

"And it touches you closely that one of your own blood should become a criminal?"

"Hit stabs me, Mr. Digby, and there's only one consolation. Death has lately done his best to wipe off that stain from our skutchen."

"Would you be pleased to hear, Mr. Baron, that I can prove from testimony that will hold, I believe, in any court of law, that Alick Baron was no criminal—was, in fact, convicted on the perjured testimony of his brother?"

"Oh ! con yo?" exclaimed Mr. Baron, leaping up from his chair and shaking Mr. Digby's arms by the wrists in his agitation, leaping, too, into his native speech. "Yo conna do that, con yo, Mr. Digby?"

"I can, Mr. Baron, and by heaven I will."

"Thank God, thank God. But then," as he left loose and sat down, overcome with revulsion of feeling, "what huse is't, Alick's dead, Alick's dead," and the tears fell thick and fast.

"What would you say, Mr. Baron, if I had to tell you that I'm not sure about that?"

"Eh, what? Yo conno do that, yo conna do that. Th' Admiralty sent me word—th' papers are there, Mr. Digby, in that drawer saying how he perished. Perished, like a Baron, Mr. Digby"—looking proudly up—"perished! My poor Alick that's beendandled so often hon this knee when neither Betty nor Jonah knew owt on 't!" And again the tears ran down his thin cheeks.

"Yes, Mr. Baron, it would be sinful to excite hopes, and trifle with your feelings if I had nothing to go upon."

And the rustling of papers, as he spoke, told Gauthorpe Baron there was written evidence. Monsell went through the whole story—the proof of his being alive in Norway, the proof of his innocence by the dying confession of Amos Saynor in presence of himself, Andrew Heron, and the woman, with the

names of others who could testify—and as he had since ascertained gladly would testify—to the *alibi* which would clear him entirely.

He seemed to be overwhelmed with all this assertion, and his spirit fainted within him. But when the testimony, as Monsell put it, stood pointing all one way, his spirit revived, and, like another in far distant ages, he seemed convinced, exclaiming—

“Alick’s alive! Alick’s alive! Let him come and see me before I die.”

There was glistening admiration and delight in Monsell’s eyes at hearing this, and his heart seemed to breathe out of his lungs with a free and a great relief.

It was something to have helped on such a great spirit of restitution towards an injured man whom he had never seen, but whose case he had made almost his own. He felt in anticipation the thrill which should be his that night when he should put down the pen and lay his head on his pillow after inditing a letter to the English Consul inclosing another to Alick Baron, telling him of the condition of his family, the delight of his mother at his escape from the sea, the prospect

he had of getting his discharge, and the interest which the lord of Manor Farm had in his return to his native country.

Mr. Gauthorpe Baron looked rather ashamed, when his agitation passed away, of his weakness, but his northern sense of hospitality came to his relief.

“Mr. Digby, hew’ll take something? Yes, yes, you must, Hi’ll take no denial.”

“Margery,” shouted out the old bachelor, “bring in th’ cowl meat.”

They lingered over the wine which, put on a good solid substratum of strong emotion, is a good thing for opening hearts. Monsell opened his own by telling his plans and how he hoped by the help of his friend, Lord Thornton, to get Alick’s discharge, but he feared he would have to spare the time, though he was much wanted in Middlewood just then, to go up to London and get all the difficulties smoothed away.

“Hew’ll want money, Mr. Digby. Hi’ve been in London, and it’s a dear place. Let me pay. Hi’ve never spent above half what th’ old farm brings in.”

He pressed him much, and Monsell thought

it right to agree to present the bill of his expenses when he should return.

"Hew said, Mr. Digby, that Squire led many of these poor rioters hinto trouble?"

Digby acknowledged his belief in his guilt.

"Then hit becomes a Baron to help 'em hout. Come to me for help to get counsel to speak for them."

Digby thanked him in the names of many poor wives and sweethearts, mothers and sisters. He rose to go.

"There's one thing more, Mr. Digby, Life's short, hand hi may not live to make another will. Mine's hin that drawer, and Stephen Greenhalgh, of Heydale, a trew, hard-working, honest man, has a copy. Hall is left to Alick, and then to Squire if Alick dies before me. Alick's alive, that's right; but Squire must have nowt; hand th' wenches musn't be forgotten, nor hold Betty neyther. You'll be a hexecketor, Mr. Digby, hif we want one?"

"As you please, Mr. Baron, if you can get nobody better. But if I may express an opinion I would recommend a codicil at once to your will, making these alterations."

"No, you don't say so. Will it take long?"

"A few minutes. Just call in the man-servant and maid-servant, when we have got it done."

Half an hour afterwards there was added to the parchment, in the best legal phraseology Monsell could command, the following—

"Item I revoke all bequests to the said Squire Baron, and bequeath to Betty Baron, mother of the said Alick Baron, a yearly sum of forty pounds, payable quarterly out of my real and personal estate; and also to each and several of her daughters, to wit Ruth Baron and Jane Baron, the sum of thirty pounds a year, to be paid quarterly out of my real and personal estate. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of September, one thousand eight hundred and sixteen.

"GAUTHORPE BARON.

"Signed and declared by the said Gauthorpe Baron as and for a codicil to his will in the presence of us (present at the same time), who in his presence at his request, and

in the presence of each other have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses.

“JOHN HOUGH.

“MARGERY FELLOWS.”

“What an odd character it is,” said Monsell to himself, when going home, “with its odds and ends of information, its odds and ends of tastes for this thing and that, and thoroughness in nothing ; its odds and ends of mincing cockneyisms and Lancashire *patois* ; its ridiculous family pride, which I’m afraid I’ve played on too much ; and its kind heart underlying all ! I wonder if living alone as an old bachelor has brought on all these fads ? ”



## CHAPTER XII.

### ON THE TRAIL.

NED LODGE had said to Squire Baron: "These Cumberland Dogberrys don't seem to be up to much, Squire. Now that your eldest brother Alick is drowned, you are in for something good from your Uncle Gauthorpe. Do you know that he made a will, and left all to you if Alick died?"

"Yah. Aw knawd abeaut th' will, but aw dunno knaw what's in 't."

"Take my word for it that you are his heir, if you can get hold of that will. Men don't often like to make a second will, and the chances are that he won't. And Greenhalgh knows whereabouts that will is. Don't you take?"

Squire didn't quite take. He didn't quite see the connection betwixt Cumberland and his uncle's will.

"You dunderhead!" exclaimed Ned, asserting the mental and personal ascendancy

which was so easy to him over the whole tribe of Squires and Wards; "can't you see what Willy Greenhalgh can do for you?"

Squire looked in a sort of stupid maze.

"You wool-gathering, fluffy witted dunce, can't you see that if you go up to Cumberland to find this lad, whom we must have for the October Assizes at Lancaster, you may worm something out of him about this will. You may get him to go and procure it for you under a half promise of letting him off, and, when you've got all out of him that you can, why hand him over to the constables, of course."

There was much in this which jumped with Squire's will, and there was much in it which froze him to the very marrow of his bones. He did not feel bright at the idea of a meeting with Willy. It was next door to as bad as meeting Tom Heron, and what that was he had only lately found out when he ventured to get some information about the Greenhalgh family from his mother.

Besides, he had noticed that Ned now always chose him out for something that had danger in it. There was a laughing devil in

that man which made him, while he did not care over-much for personal danger himself, to sneer eternally at everybody else who did.

“Aw welly wish aw wor eawt o’ this mak o’ work. He taks meh for a reg’lar chotty,” Squire murmured to himself, as time after time he had to put his precious skin in danger in those rough villages about Leeds and Craven, whither Ned so often, with a laughing, mocking eye, sent him on *business*.

“You see, Squire, you’re one of my old hands now, an experienced man, and a clever one; and, besides, you’ll soon have earned your pension and can then live where you like, and never prepare beam and warp, or throw shuttle again. Eh man! It’s worth a bit of trouble for two or three months more. Isn’t it now?”

Squire couldn’t help admitting that it was, while a suspicion stole into his mind that the man was only quizzing him, and, worse still—in his view an awful crime!—that the very perfidy, which he was prepared to practise at all times on everybody else, might be practised on himself at last, on him, Squire Baron, the spy of the Government Spy!

It was a part of his punishment assuredly, but it was hard that it should come from the very hands that should have administered rewards and comfort rather than terrors. But, however this may be, there was only one thing for Squire, and that was, hard thought, obedience pure and simple, implicit and full. The first act of rebellion, and all hope of pension and reward was over. Nor was this the worst of it. Ned could take himself quietly out of the way and denounce Squire among men who would speedily have their pound of flesh out of him. Yes, in his power to govern him, to reward him, to punish him, to laugh at his terrors, and to twist his poor inferior intelligence about in any direction he chose it should go, Squire felt that he had found a master who must not be gainsaid.

Accordingly when Ned gave him the letter which he had received from the Chief Constable of Cumberland, saying that no such person could be found, and directed him to go and use his own information and look smart in capturing young Greenhalgh, he was fain to obey, little as he liked his mission, and much as he resented that queer sarcastic

smile which sat on Ned's face as he left his room, and which seemed to follow him through the front door and over the moors and hills right into Borrowdale.


"Aw should loike to put Ned a hot un in, but aw conno do it."

Such was the state of Squire's mind.

He found no difficulty in getting the assistance of the Keswick constabulary, but much in getting any information. Nobody had seen the fair-haired stranger. Several had heard of a clever young smith, but he was not light haired, and there was nothing suspicious in a man engaged for the season, turning his hand either to field or elementary forge work.

Squire inquired about what fairs were being held, or likely to be held soon, and went with a satellite somewhat far and wide, without result. At last he went down to that at Grange, saw his man, and lost him as soon as he found him.

Headlong horsemanship was not one of his accomplishments, and if it had, this required a horse, which was *non est*. And, when the chivalry of Borrowdale returned, it was not to express any sympathy with him and his



errand, but rather the reverse, for one of the pursuers had discovered that the man they had hunted was Morrison's smith, a decent young fellow, who'd steal nobody's cattle. So that indignation at having put them to all this trouble arose against Squire and not against Willy, who became, by a curious revulsion of sentiment, an object of pity rather than otherwise.

But Squire was not to be denied. He had kept his eye upon Willy's companions, and he determined that he would stalk that game. He tracked them home. He hung about the house until Geordie left it to go to the old yew trees, and, although he was doubled upon and missed his chance, he managed to find the secret out by tracking and watching, but only when it was too late.

It was very dark that night when Geordie Morrison got to the rendezvous near the "Four Brothers." He had run so hard that he had half churned the milk in the bottle, and he had left some of the bread on the road for the first comer, beast or bird, in his climbings and doublings to throw off Squire. There was enough for the present meal, big

as Willy's appetite was with the afternoon's fairing and the evening's horsemanship. Both agreed that the grove might do for a night's lodging, but was as useless for hiding in the day time as a gipsy's tent pitched on the village green for fortune telling. Geordie bethought him of a lonely little farm on the moors where the house was hidden behind a little rising ground and gave access to two gorges or gullies, which trended away from that point, offering many facilities for escape. He proposed to go and see these friends of his own and his family, and obtain a few days' shelter for Willy, promising to return before daybreak and take him thither.

Willy retired within the shadow of the trees, but he scarcely liked the closeness and the gloom. He could fancy that ghosts were more likely to come to him there than outside; in fact, he nearly got a crick in the neck with the quick way in which he turned his head once or twice when he heard a rustling sound behind him. Then again he remembered some old superstition about sleeping under a yew tree—how it stole the life out of the young veins by slow degrees.

So he came outside, and still in deep gloom, far too deep for anyone to discover him, unless they tumbled over him, he leaned back with his head resting on a stone and his eyes upturned to the single pair of stars which he could see, musing on the home far away and trying to recall every little peculiarity in every room in the house, and especially in his dear old granny's. Well he could imagine that she might be awake and thinking of him—perhaps breathing a prayer for his special protection; well he could fancy his sister falling asleep in a wonderment as to what Willy was doing; well he could picture his mother saying something to his father about him ere the worthy couple grew oblivious in the deep slumber of the toiler; well he could construct in thought the whole family scene—house, garden, hamlet, inhabitants, everything that once made that sacred spot called home, from which he was at this moment an exile, laid on the dewy turf, with a stone for his pillow. But ere the sweet cheater of life's heavy loads wafted him away to the paradise of youthful dreams, with a dark-eyed houri in the foreground, he solemnly made his vow,



borne on the breath of his evening prayer, that when once he should have got clear of the troubles of the hour, he would with youthful wilfulness bring no more sorrow on those he loved.

It was still dark when Geordie awoke him and bade him follow him. They left the gloom of the trees, and passing towards the beck, which came foaming down the hills, they waded up it in the growing light, being resolved to leave no trail behind, if possible. It was not sunrise when they got under the shelter of the old shepherd's roof and feasted on the homely meal which his primitive dame had prepared.

There, for some weeks, Willy rested from pursuit, and laboured with the old man in his calling, which took them to the loneliest and most secluded glens and fells. These weeks were a potent factor in Willy's life, and had a large leverage on its aftercourse. Often enough alone the whole day, from early morn to dewy eve, his thoughts fed on the memories of the past, and took a strong religious turn. His old life, in sooth, was coming back to him across the chasm of these late unfortunate

leanings, the life as it was when Andrew Heron was his loved and trusted counsellor. Moments of deep contrition were often his, moments of solemn prayer within the covert of some overhanging rock, or beneath the shade of some tree as solitary as himself on the waste, saving the Great Presence, which he felt was nearer than of late. His little unused Testament, that Martha had thrust into his hand with her small savings, was now regularly in his pocket and often read ; and a comparison of its teachings with what he had been taught by Andrew kept his mind employed, while his devotional life deepened and broadened. One of those days, with pencil and paper in hand, he employed in inditing a letter to his great friend, telling him of his thoughts and feelings, and hinting, when these troubles were over, his strong desire to follow that profession which had long been his grandmother's secret aim for him. Andrew rejoiced when that letter got safely into his hands.

Geordie felt that there was a watch upon all their movements and kept away, and Squire fretted his heart out to get to know

something of the will, and his agents to get the reward which had been offered. But the law of life is, "he that seeketh findeth," if a man will only seek everywhen and everywhere; and Willy had to move. One night, in the deepest gloom of its mid hour, there was a barking of dogs, and Willy said to himself, "They've come at last," and seized his stick, which he had long since selected for his weapon, with the resolution of leaping through the little window down upon anyone in the way, and cudgelling his path into the ravine. He stood listening breathlessly while the old man parleyed at the door, his room window being so situated at the rear of the house that he could get out without being seen.

It was Geordie.

"Willy, wakken up."

It was soon explained that the officers had been hanging about Hope Farm all day, and one of the labourers, who was leaving their employ, had scented the secret and sold it.

Snatching some food which the old woman had readily provided, they passed out into the deep gloom.

"Poor young sowl, they'll get him yet,"  
the old woman pityfully ejaculated, gazing  
out into the night.

Voices were heard as of men approaching.  
The fugitives had heard them before.

"Hast' gotten th' reet road, chap ?"

It was Squire calling to the spy in the  
van, where he himself never meant to be.

Geordie led his friend swiftly over the high  
ground, treading often on sheets of heathery  
expanse, whose glorious purple and scarlet  
they could not see. They never halted once.  
Willy felt that they were descending, then  
crossing the valley, then passing under some  
black, frowning mass, which stood out as a  
deeper gloom against the thick, cloud-laden  
sky.

He whispered to Geordie—for they had  
scarcely spoken in their swift, silent flight—

"What's that ?"

"Honister Cragg."

They sat down to take breath, Geordie  
intimating that the eagles built near which  
carried off the lambs, and one of which had  
attacked a man with a sickle in his hand—so  
the old wives said—in attempting to get at

a child, which its mother had laid down in the barley field while she bound the sheaves.

They passed up into the high ground betwixt the Liza and Buttermere, past the lone little Bleaberry tarn, onwards for miles through the long, coarse grass, or over the heather, or tearing athwart the yellow-flowered ling.

Day dawn came, and they saw in the far distance a figure, weird and solitary, stalking with a long staff in hand. They sat down and rested. Another figure came out of the mist that hung upon one quarter of the scene, with the same kind of long staff in its hand. The twain seemed to hold a conference about something lost or strayed, for they pointed in various directions, as if disputing. A dog barked. The call of grouse was heard.

"It's Sam'l," said Geordie, "that's talking to t' under shepherd," as he noticed Willy's anxious look.

The cock crew. A thrilling, prolonged, plaintive cry came down the mountain on their left, so human in its tone, so solitary and clear, that Willy started. He thought it

was the cry of a child. Geordie laughed, for he knew that it was only the distant bleat of a sheep, made awfully distinct and pathetic in the excessive silence of these wild and beautiful uplands.

They remained sitting a while, looking down on the conversing couple; noting the dogs, which had come up, coursing in great wide circles around them, as if motion was the only way of dissipating the swelling happiness which distended the canine breast.

The sun rose, and his level beams turned the mist below into golden haze, through which slowly revealed itself a moorland house, weathered, grey, and solemn-looking, but clean and decent, its little panes of glass clear as crystal, giving gold for gold to the early sun. A large square of stone wall—a dry wall, as Geordie called it, and weathered as grey as the house—encompassed the building as if it were one great sheepfold, and at each end was a clump of trees, by no means as large and majestic as Willy had seen at Kulm Hall or in Trafford Park.

“That,” said Geordie, “is heam for thee, Willy.”

Willy looked at the heam, or home, and did not dislike it. He liked it no worse when, as they lay, the mists below lifted and parts of Buttermere and Crummock came out in flashing silver.

When Geordie thought that the old people would be sitting down to breakfast he proposed that they should go down through the "girse" to the house. They passed the shepherds, Geordie giving the elder a hint to be silent about Willy, and entered the stone floored kitchen. A great fire was roaring up the vast chimney nook, and five persons—old Luke Adelthwaite and Hannah his wife, with two sons and a daughter—were seated at the solid oaken table. Porridge, beer, bread, and bacon were at hand to regale the night wanderers, and a mangling time of it the eatables had.

It was soon evident to Willy why they had come to this lone farmstead. Clearly Geordie and Alice, the only daughter, were no strangers and no enemies. And during the rest of the day they were much together, for Geordie stayed until evening, not considering it safe to leave until dusk set in for fear of being traced.

It was arranged after breakfast that Willy should help on the farm if necessary, but should also be mainly engaged in any smith work which he could do, the servants of the farm being left to infer that he was a poor relation out of work, and a smith by trade, who had come to stay with them a few weeks.

Before they parted, Geordie said to him—

“Willy, Esther axed fadder for what ye addled at heam, an’ here it is.”

So saying, he counted into his hands the coin which represented the wages agreed upon, and the amount earned.

Willy was glad of this, because the little stock of money had mostly melted away which he had brought from home, and which had enabled him to keep unsmirched his Lancashire feeling of independence when crossing the hills, and, practically in many cases, begging his way; for the money was refused when, at the lone mountain-side cot, he asked for a bit of bread and a drink of milk, and tendered coin.

“If ye’re foller’d ony moor, Willy, mak yer way to t’ yew trees, an’ at neet coom up to Houp Farm, knock at my winder, an’ leave



a bit o' fern seed outside, an' I'll coom wi' summut to yet an' drink, an' then tak ye somewheer else."

So saying, the brave, faithful lad—whose eyes, when he spake thus, always seemed to be borrowed from Esther's head, they gleamed so alike—bade him good-bye, and started on a tramp through the whole livelong night round by the head of Buttermere to Newlands, and thence by the hills to Manesty and up Borrowdale to his home.

Alice Adelthwaite looked on Willy with a pity akin to sisterly affection, and made his life during the next few weeks far from miserable. They were old friends, the Morrisons and the Adelthwaites—that is, friends for the last five hundred years or so—and had often intermarried; and the result of a knowledge of whom Willy was come—"that sparkling lass, Mary Morrison, whom all t' lads of t' country side were mad about, so bonny she was and so mad were they; Jim Armstrong, of Swinside, and Ben Coward, of Grange, who niver wed as long as he lived; an' flung hersel away on a datal man like Mercer that cut sto-en," so

chatted old John Adelthwaite—why this gave Willy the position of a kinsman, and the days of romance seemed to come to the old man and his blooming daughter when he told stories of their merry makings in Borrowdale, and the proud way in which eagle-faced Mary used to carry herself among the young statesmen of Luke's youth.

The days passed merrily enough away for Willy, considering his position. There were the usual resources of otter hunting in a river some distance off, fishing in the lakes, and looking after any wild kind of animal or bird that promised sport. Once he travelled many miles to see a man let down by ropes over the side of an eagle crag to rob the eagle's nest and bring the eaglets away, his only weapon against the beaks of the infuriated birds, if they should appear, being his long mountain staff, with its spiked end. Occasionally Alice had a friend, some ruddy, healthy lassie from the neighbouring farmsteads, deemed near if miles away. Willy found it easy to make himself agreeable to them, and they found it easy at Alice's request—love makes women among the best of

secret keepers—to say little or nothing about the visitor. The bond of good fellowship and primitive fidelity to each other was a better preservative of his secret than any bribe.

So the happy days passed, the heads of the mountain peaks acknowledging the change from autumn to early winter, as it sowed its first coriander seed on their whitening scalps, and the meads in the dales grew browner and sorer with the fleeing hours. And, in the meantime, was passing over that assize which, leaving Willy, as Monsell Digby fervently prayed, still free of the constable's grip, gave him, in the Curate's opinion, a better chance.

## CHAPTER XIII.

ALONE ! ALONE !

ARTHUR MELLER kept as much out of the sight of Middlewood and Chadwick Fold people as he could. We need not say that he particularly avoided introducing himself to the big, bluff, rough Mr. Nadin, head of the Manchester police at that time. He had taken up his abode in a little street called Gun Street, off a wide, partially built street or way called Oldham Road, and for a little while he remained night and morning very secluded in his little chamber. Gun Street consisted of small cottage houses in which factory operatives employed at the surrounding mills dwelt. A few labourers lived there, and some families of Irish, who crowded the little dwellings so that sometimes as many as eighteen or twenty slept in a single chamber, and fearful legends went that as many as thirty-two had found bed and shelter at night in the kitchen of one of them. It was not like

Chadwick Fold, with the pleasant woods and fields running up to the back of the house, and stretching magnificently away in front for miles. Things were changed—to the Arthur within as well as the Arthur without. He became moody, fretful, low-spirited. He was not a self-contained character, capable of holding on, no matter who fell from him, strong and hopeful, no matter what loneliness might be his, so that he knew he was in the right. He possessed as we have seen the ordinary man's impulsive courage, when exigency called it forth ; but the courage which waits and endures, still cheerful and strong when neglect chills and solitude besets with its sapping influence, was scarcely his.

Besides, there was that touch of vanity in him which made him murmur to himself at having others setting him the work to do which he had been accustomed to assign to subordinates. But most of all he was lonely. He had nowhere to go to, no one to speak to. True, Alf Swires was in the town, but he had a grudge of his own against Alf that kept them separate.

There was the tavern to be sure, but that

might throw him among informers. The Mechanic's Institute was scarcely yet hatched, and, if it had been, it would not have been the place for a man in semi-hiding. Hence, he was very lonely, a loneliness which was scarcely broken by the half blind and wholly deaf old woman with whom he lodged.

He had subsided into a sort of listlessness of spirit none the less hard to endure that it seemed to leave him without the will to employ himself when his work was over. His life became a purgatory of aimlessness, a torture of inactivities, yet there were occasional flashes of energy—the divine would say moments of temptation—when he felt that to do anything was better than to do nothing. To a man in such a mood the mind is like prepared ground ready for the first seed of evil suggestion which may be cast designedly or accidentally upon it. It chanced one evening in late September, when the dusk was a very convenient friend to him, that he was threading his way among the clay pits of what is now a busy street called Swan Street, that he met with a man that he knew, and who instantly recognised him.

“ Ay, Arty, is that thee, mon ?”

It was Will o’ Toms, that is, William the son of Thomas Knight, of Stretton Fold. Arthur was unusually lonely and depressed that night.

Ordinarily he would have found it no difficult matter to have thrown Will off, but to-night his simple but cautious “ Come wi’ us, Arty,” had a magnetic power which he could scarcely have credited himself. Arthur seemed to turn with him at once in an opposite direction, passing up Great Ancoats, on towards Pin Mill Brow. He seemed, as he afterwards confessed, to go like an automaton whichever way his moorland companion wended—nothing asking, whatever doubting.

They were joined near Store Street by Jack o’ Bills, Mr. John Fitton, son and heir of Mr. William Fitton, road repairer to the Township of Chadderton Fold. Arthur began to shrink a little in thought from his companions, but he hadn’t the courage to right about face, front to the rear, and go back to his lonely lodgings. They went on a little farther, turned up a dark narrow passage,

ascended a few steps, and found themselves outside a large club room, whence voices were heard. It was clear that there was some sort of a parliament in session. Will gave a peculiar knock, and the door opened cautiously and the two companions entered, indicating Arthur "wor o' th' reet sort." An inner door was closed upon him for a moment and he stood without in the dark of the little vestibule. Oh, Arthur, if you had only turned round and walked away then! It was one of those moments which are given to us all in the crisis of temptation, when our guardian angel comes to us direct from God Himself, and we turn deaf to the pleading voice! Some hurried whispers, more protestations that he was "aw reet," and the door opened and he was drawn in, as if by a secret force, and fifty men were looking intently upon him.

"Arthur Meller, will you join us in ridding the country of all its troubles, putting down all tyrants, and making this land a prosperous land for the poor man?"

Arthur knew nothing about what all this meant, but he at once said he would.



“Right,” said the Chairman, with a look of satisfaction, and plunged into the business before them, his satellites casting long suspicious glow-worm kind of glances at him from unwashed faces, long after the Chairman had become absorbed in greater matters. Arthur in awhile, as one pair of hard gazing eyes after another withdrew themselves, was able to concentrate his thoughts on things around. He observed as the shy, ashamed, confused feeling passed away, that his two introducers were gazing at him askance with looks which contained dark shadows within them which he could not like; but he felt he must make the best of it, as he was now in their power.

“What’s th’ meeting about, Will?”

“We’n cawing it a botanerkle meeting,” he whispered back again.

“Yo’n moind, Arty, if yo’re axed, to say it wor botanerkle—flowers an’ sich loike, yer knaw.” And a cunning twinkle of the eye with a diabolical grin came from that simple child of nature bred amid heather, fern, cow-slip and violet.

There was a long talk about other meetings, and then Arthur came away with his

two friends. Somehow he attended several more of such gatherings, and at last he got interested and went with a will, having come to the conclusion that the country was on the verge of ruin, and could only be saved by themselves; that the crown was indifferent, the nobility oppressive, the officers of the army a set of wanton lozels—Chetwynd for instance—capitalists tyrannical, and everybody but the wage paid class entirely corrupt. The anger of these secret conspirators was not cooled by what was soon to occur at the forthcoming Assize at Lancaster, however much in their secret hearts their courage might be damped. Whispers came faintly to Arthur that a great movement had been concocted in London, and that something in the spring would be done. He was getting hot now and wished to do something. Worse, he was getting flattered by receiving some sort of a little place among the confraternity. Worse still, no counter attractions came to him, no better companions found him, no tastes were acquired for intellectual things, such as a city can help to engender. But, more unfortunate than all, no soul and body-

saving love came for some sweet face and voice that suggested a happy home with the one being before whom all other beings become as cold and distant shadows. Better to have been pining like poor Mary at home over lost treasures, than have been dead altogether to the higher impulses of sweet young life. Better to him than any earthly fortune which might have come, would have been that "means of grace," the tender attractive love that would have drawn his feet out of the road which lead to these wild and flighty gatherings, into pathways where the breath of autumnal evening, and voice of cushat, and song of laverock, would have mingled with the gentle whispers of life's sweetest and most thrilling confidences. There were voices about him, but they were not the ones which magnetise the will of wild and headstrong youth.

Occasionally a Sunday School teacher from the remarkable Sunday School in George Leigh Street would try to induce him to join them, and acquire companions and friends for himself at the very time that he might be doing good to others. Had he listened, he might

have found a balm for his spirit, for the young folks there appropriated each other as lovers in quite a peculiar way, to the exclusion of most outsiders. Once he was addressed by the most remarkable Sunday scholar in the world. Whilst walking down George Leigh Street one day, he saw a person down the street whom the neighbours called "th' owd woman." She was knitting on her threshold—knitting deftly, too—and, as Arthur passed, she dropped her ball of worsted, which came bounding into the street at his feet, and Arthur picked it up and gave her it. She thanked him, and asked him into the house. Having a little time to spare, he went in to talk with the old woman, a touch of pride making him wish to boast that he had spoken to her. She was a middle-sized, somewhat stoutish person, with a round face that did not appear very deeply furrowed with the plough of time. Her look was contented and placid, and Arthur estimated her age at about eighty-five. It was nearly twenty-five years more than that! Yes, she is passing now her one hundred and eighth year, and that

old woman shuffling about in the kitchen is her daughter. For twenty years, since she passed her eighty-sixth year, she has gone down to the daily service at "th' owd church," now dignified into the Cathedral Church of Manchester. She has been troubled that she could not follow the service because she could not read, and ashamed when kind folk offered her a book which her woman's pride would not allow her to refuse. But the hypocrisy of the proceeding, and the desire to know more of God's will, has worked upon her mind, and she has commenced to read at the ripe age of one hundred and two years, and she can now, with the full tale of one hundred and seven years on her shoulders, read quite well, and that without glasses ! What a story of resolution for this young man Arthur, now whirling about like a human waif in the human stream of strong wills, to hear her account of it—how she came home one day from church and said to her daughter, the aged woman beside her, who thought it far too late, that she *would* learn to read ; that, in spite of dissuasion, she went to a neighbour and asked him to "larn her a lesson ;"

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that the good man willingly did so ; that she stayed with him "larning" until she had tired him out, and then went straight off to another neighbour, whom she had arranged it with, to continue untired the delightful task. Moreover, she induced the little lads to come in of a night, and first one would teach her and then another, until she had tired out all. Then, when the Sunday School removed in its growing necessities into the street, she joined that, every Sunday morning, and went to say her lessons in the very school, at the very time in which her own great grandchildren were being taught, before she took her way to her old place in the Old Church ; and teachers and scholars came into her house in turn on the week days and taught her until, in her hundred and fifth year, she could read quite well. There was all the lesson in this old woman that Arthur needed, only it needed to be taught from blooming cheeks and flashing eyes, borne on the sweet breath of tender hints and words.

The old woman beckoned him to a chair with an air of humble dignity. Overhead he noticed a little bird in its cage. It flew into

the house and into the fire—ah, Arthur, aren't you doing that now—and the two old women chasing after it, the elder woman, at the nimble age of 107, caught it in her hand—will any good woman arise to catch you out of the fire of your dangers?—and the bird lived with them, filling the home with its delightful songs, and lifting up the hearts of its humble occupants to the Giver of all good. They showed the poor little songster the same kind of tenderness that she did the little children, which made them throng about her to become her companions and teachers. As Arthur sat down before her, he felt something more than the idle young man's interest in being amused or entertained. A deepening respect crept over him as his eye lit upon the thick fall of hoary hairs—here, indeed, a crown of glory, because found in the way of righteousness—upon the shrewd, strong face, seamed with thought and time, yet slightly so, considering the great burden of her years, or his ear gave itself to the kindly, motherly talk. Catherine Prescott was reputed “very common sensible,” and it would have been well if she could have transferred

some of it, with her advice, into Arthur's mind. Catherine was not a Manchester woman by birth or connections. She was one of those numerous atoms gathered from every point of the compass to furnish a great city, and hailed from Denbigh, in North Wales ; but she had lived most of her many years in Liverpool, and other parts of Lancashire. Hence, her language was somewhat mixed compared with the pure Manchester Doric, not then passing into the sublimities of correct or cocknefied English. There has been too much, perhaps, of such Doric in this veracious history, and we will, in a great measure, translate her, though, in truth, she deserves, for the sake of her character—that whip of scorpions in the eyes of most Parliamentary orators—to be “literally reported.”

“Yo’ve lately come to live in these parts ? ” she said enquiringly, looking up from her knitting, which was progressing vigorously under her nimble fingers.

Arthur felt uncomfortable.

“Then he was already known ! ” He acknowledged, however, that he had lately taken a room in Gun Street.



“In Manchester?” added the old woman, correctingly.

She saw, she intimated to him, that he had not yet got the sallow, hall mark of Manchester life upon his young ruddy cheeks.

“Ha’ yo joined th’ schoo’?”

No, Arthur had not done that, as yet. Then the sooner the better. These were dangerous times for young men. Old Peggy Compton, dead and gone these last fifteen years, used to tell her of the forty-six, and the heads of Doctor Deacon’s two sons, that were out with Prince Charles Edward, hoisted on th’ old Exchange as a warning. She had heard Peggy say she had seen that “most unworthy of primitive Bishops,” as his tomb in St. Ann’s Churchyard still describes him, taking off his hat to the two rotting, crow-picked heads when he passed them. Arthur shuddered. He thought that we should never have such times again “i’ England.”

“Dunno yo be sure o’ that,” exclaimed Catherine, as she stretched out her arm pulling up the worsted that had got entangled about his chair by the leaping

vagaries of the ball. "Nay, dunno think that. There's young fellows near us that'er getting their throats ready for th' hangman's tow. Ah! it will be a sad thing if these auld eyne mun see such seets i' Manchester, as auld fowk talked about when we came hither twenty-five years sin'. May the Lord summon His unworthy sarvant—now," she continued reverently, with an abstracted air, "rather than I should live to know what fathers and mothers must suffer if these things happen any more."

Arthur felt uncomfortable, and wished himself in his lonely room, which he had, until now, begun to consider his condemned cell.

"Dun yo go to church?"

Arthur had not been lately.

"It's a great help to th' young. 'The fear of the Lord is the *beginning* of wisdom;' aye and the love of every good word and work is th' end on 't."

Arthur was silent because he was uncomfortable.

"Whatn we want now-a-days is to see young men and lasses steady an' God-fear-

ing, 'marking them that cause divisions,' an' shunning 'em wi' a' their hearts."

"Have I done this?" said Arthur's heart. to Arthur's soul, and the answer was not what old Catherine would have liked to hear.

The old woman, with a tact taught of much connection with the young, did not wish to give him house-preaching—that bug-bear of both old and young—but only to set him thinking; and glided off into pleasant little stories of times when his great grandfather and mother were being "shortened."

Arthur grew more at his ease, and could not help noticing that the younger woman was, in point of fact, the old one, bearing the burden of distinct senility, while she was silent and dutiful at her mother's voice as a well-trained child; and, on the other hand, a touch of matronliness and sympathy with his own feelings gave a tinge of life's summer to the woman's mind, which, dissipated with the fascinating touch of interest and fellow feeling, the awfulness of vast memories garnered in such wide embracing years.

He left her in a better mood than he was in before, but somehow the leering eye of

Will o' Toms drew him down to the "botan-erke meeting" that very night. Yet he accepted her invitation to go to her house again. It was after word came about the Assizes.

"Be warned, young man, by th' fate of some of those poor lads. I niver had a lad bairn, but I can speer out for mysel what some o' those Middlewood folk are feeling just now awhoam here," laying her hand with a meaning look upon her breast.

Arthur acknowledged that he understood that the parents were suffering more than the martyrs, as some of the friends called them.

"Martyrs !" exclaimed old Catherine, with a look nearer akin to contempt than he had fancied her placid gentle face could produce, "nay, nay, young man, call 'em victims ; victims to their own will-worship as the Good Book says," laying her hand on a large New Testament, a present from one of the fellows of the Old Church. "They conna bide to be under tutors an' governors, an' they must talk o' reform—what form that is we dunno know here—an' they get into mischief, an' they're consumed wi' care, as all wicked folk must be."

Arthur was silent. Was he wicked in wish-

ing to see things better as he did? His heart told him that his desire was not wicked. But how about the way in which he sought it? Was his the will-worship which old Catherine said St. Paul reproved? He was not so sure there. He felt shaken in his trust in himself by the old woman's remarks.

Full many a shaft at random sent,  
Finds mark the archer never meant.

Was old Catherine really talking as if she knew exactly what he was engaged in, and had at that very time subscribed his name to?

"An' so these poor folks have great trouble," Catherine continued. "God has given me peace all my days. Only oncet when I was happy in my place at Mr. Edge's near Leigh, an' I heard that this bairn—" turning to the silent old woman, herself a grandmother—"was badly used; that," said she, reflectingly, "was just six years efter a' those poor folk were hanged an' quartered for joining Prince Charlie, as they ca'd him—mony fine lads, Arthur, were hanged then, or kept rotting in prison till they deed o' jail fever inside, an' their mother's deed o' sorrow outside, or sent off to th' colernys and niver

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heard on more ;—aye, only oncet leaving out o' seet my husband's, Ralph Prescott's, death at Atherton, when we'd been wed only eight years—Ralph was a good kind man—only oncet I've had real trouble. But, Jehovah—Jireh, the Lord provided. I left my nice place, an' took a cottage an' baked bread, an' made cakes, an' for forty-three year the Lord sustained me wi' plenty an' peace. An' I've had peace a' my life, an' *I have it now*. 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace wi' Him,' an' I've no enemies, mony friends, an' much content."

How Arthur groaned as he dimly discerned the power of this feeling to fight back the might of years, and the ghostly form of him who carries the scythe in his hand!—a feeling present where he had been taught not to look for it, in the very old, and absent, often in what he thought was its native home, the breasts of the young, and especially at this moment absent from his own !

## CHAPTER XIV.

### JUSTICE.

It is early morning in the last day of October, 1816. A white fog lies along the bed of the Irwell different to the deep, yellow black cloud that now-a-days with larger population and vaster manufactories often pays its tribute to the onward progress of commerce and wealth. All is stern and quiet on the grim walls of the New Bailey, and not a clog is clattering on the adjoining roadway over the river—the Bridge of Sighs, as many have called it. A coach and four, silently as it would move, breaks the stillness that broods over the toiling thousands before dawn, and the blinking “Charley,” who has almost slept walking on his nightly watch, as Wellington’s soldiers a few years before had so often done on their march, looks up at the vehicle and nods a satisfactory compliment to his own prescience and knowledge as it creeps past and enters the prison.

A little beyond the head of the bridge Charley hears the sound of hoofs, and turning round espies cavalry forming stealthily up. It is the same regiment which took over the charge of Chadwick Fold from its defenders, but Captain Butler is not there, and Lieutenant Chetwynd is also absent. The sergeant is there, a portly personage on whom, to the very ends of his grand moustache, the pride of his life, sit sternness and promptness. If you ask him what has got his old officers here, you may get no answer—duty excludes talk. If you have the good luck to get a chat with him when military stiffness is unbuttoned over a pipe or cigar, the sergeant can tell much that is interesting which none but men of his own romantic experience can—he will tell you that Captain Butler has left the service “on urgent private affairs.”

“ Good officer, Captain Butler, sir; rode down on his bridle hand with him in the great charge of Le Marchant, sir, on the French at Salamanca. Was with him on picket duty in the Pyrenees, when we seemed to have the whole of the French



cavalry upon us in a narrow gorge ; sharpest work we was ever in. Gorge saved us. The Captain, himself, and poor Corporal Dayle, who fell, and a stout private that fell also, were rear guard. Only just room to form line for the four. And so we held on until we got out of the gorge and infantry came up. It *was* an hour ! Captain, a serious thoughtful man rather. Lieutenant Chetwynd was a brave man. All right when the enemy was in front. Didn't think much of drawing sword, and sweeping down on the foe, but a pretty ankle and a pair of laughing eyes in a girl's head, and the Lieutenant was a prisoner at once. Been in several scrapes, sir," he whispers under his breath. "The men laugh at it, but the old Colonel don't like it. I rayther suspect as this last affair will cause him to sell out."


"Indeed ?"

"Oh ! you haven't heard, sir ? Of course not. We keep it quiet in the regiment, but he came home rather mazy some ten weeks since, not sitting his horse steady at all, and his undress uniform looking as if he'd been down on his back and had had the mud

sponged off. Well, sir, he's never done duty since. There's been a great talk about an attack by rioters, footpads, and so on. My opinion is that he's been caught with his arm round some girl's waist, and settled before he could use his heavy riding whip. One of our fellows who knows a smart girl there called Heron—her brother preaches—won't tell all he know's about it. Yes, he's been very bad. "Termination of blood at the head, they call it. I call it termination of connection with us, sir. Any way they took him away when the brain fever was over, a month since, and as they carried him to the carriage I saw his head was bandaged, and his face very white," &c., &c.

When the carriage comes out it contains a full load inside and outside. The soldiers formed round it at the gateway. The prisoners, within and without, are handcuffed; and the constables, armed with pistols, are distributed amongst them. Lads of nineteen, and men that are older—Effy Heap's son, Tim, from the moors; yellow, faced Swain, Jabez Knight, Charles Watson, from Stretton Fold; John Pilkington, Robert

Kay, from Rochwood; Will Bradbury and Robin Ramsden, from Heydale; Joe Swift, Elias Wilde, and Salem Healey, from Middlewood—all looking clean and decent, and braving their fate with a song, appear as the morning breaks. The clatter of horses' hoofs and the rumble of the carriage have aroused many of the inhabitants. At first sympathy reveals herself overhead, bereft of all dignity by her nightcap, appearing at many an upper window. Then a few half-dressed men and boys, then more and more as they traverse the streets, until a fair crowd, made up of those waiting in front and those running behind gives *eclat* to the procession. Cheers and huzzas for the prisoners, groans for magistrates, soldiers, and the whole *posse comitatus* of authority, testify to the public mind on the question of the moment. But there is no violence, no attempt at rescue—that would have been absolute madness; nothing beyond applause for the martyrs when in the streets, and grave apprehensions and regrets for their fate when they re-enter their homes, distinguishes the sympathetic crowd.



"Aw wonder if that Kewritt con do owt for 'em," says more than one to another.

The carriage hurries through Pendleton, already a populous suburb, and pushes on. Bolton in due time is entered, and loud expressions of sympathy and goodwill are given them. "Never mine 'em, lads." "Down wi' th' tyrants," "Keep yer peckers up." These and other greetings reach them as the soldiers try to keep the crowd back, and daring individuals crawl under the horses just to "ha a wag o' thee hond, lad," and crawl back, risking a kick from steed or a sabre stroke from his rider.

Night finds them crossing the moors of Horwich and losing their way. Evening finds them at "Proud Preston," taking supper, and peering bipeds about them with self-satisfied noses and lips—the class of "superior persons," who, in the right divine of well cut coats and shiny hats, assume that their presence at the feeding of the wild beasts is privileged, and cannot in the honour that it confers be considered disagreeable by any properly constituted prisoner.

Loud cheers rang through the streets as

they push on for another night's journey, travelling towards the briny breezes. Sunrise shows them the rays falling in mocking gold upon the stern feudal keep where John of Gaunt had his seat of power. They enter beneath the arch of the grim old gate, and pass on to the little whitewashed cells, where at night some of them can scarcely sleep for the smothering sensations which want of free air causes—free air as some of the poor prisoners have been used to get it from hill and moor, a thrilling wine undiluted by the reek of factory, or the sickening mirk of chemical vapours.

Next morning they were before the Judge, and flitting about amongst the lawyers they observed, to their delight, Monsell Digby, and, standing apart with serious face, Andrew Heron and his brother Tom. The prisoners were more awed by the white wigs, the be-crimsoned Judge, the great wistful crowd so closely packed, than they were at the prospects of their own fortunes. They felt that they were not altogether outcasts when as they took their places in the dock, Monsell throws them a kindly pitying smile. He was there

to spend Mr. Gauthorpe Baron's money and his own in their defence. Andrew was there to step into the witness box, if either Ned Lodge or Squire Baron should appear, to tell what he had seen and knew, and to prove that their proper place was the felon's dock, and their punishment that of ringleaders, when rank and file by good policy go free. This was an attack in flank which had been purposely "kept dark" until a late moment, and the prosecution had to consider whether they would call them. They found that they could do without them, and, to the delight of his brace of rogues, got them smuggled out of the town again, unseen by one of their late victims—Squire going to resume his Cumberland search, and Ned to improve the shining hour at Dewsbury and similar localities in the West Riding.

The trial was like most other trials of that time. The poor bewildered prisoner had to speak for himself, opposed to the trained gladiator of the law, an anomaly since swept away by the sufferings and efforts of poor peasants like themselves, and good men, loving justice and mercy, above them the wealth and power.

The Judge was fair and even merciful, and Monsell's lawyers had done all that could be done to make the Jury understand that dupes and not designers were standing before them.

The result was a mitigated punishment, but still severe. John Swain got a seven years' passport to Australia, where he afterwards became rich; and two of the Middlewood men—Wilde and Healey—shared his fate. The rest received sentences of imprisonment for varying terms of one year, eighteen months, and two years respectively. One, Effy Heap's son, Tim, got off altogether to the great delight of his mother, who shouted such a "thunk yo fellies, thunk yer kindly," to the Jury, when they found him not guilty, as quite upset the gravity of the Court—that is the uncourtly part of it.

When Monsell and the Herons got home and told the result, the feeling was one of relief that it was no worse, and that no blood of poor misguided lads and peasants would be shed. Strange as it may seem, the sentence of the Court did more to quieten down the simmering spirit of insurrection and to cool the public mind to the level of

the reasonable than every kind of force and repression hitherto used. Men felt that it was in the main just, many felt it was even merciful; no one could say that the offenders were blameless; every man knew that private benevolence had played its part in pity and solid assistance; and when Monsell let it out, to take off from himself the heavy weight of thanks, that Mr. Gauthorpe Baron had striven with his gold to undo the evil of one of his name, the commendations which fell upon that representative of the old Baron ilk made him, in the gratification of a new sensation, to mince his words until they were scarcely understandable by even Margery Fellows, his long enduring and faithful housekeeper.

“Whin will he kem, Mr. Digby? Whin will he kem?” exclaimed the Lord of Manor Farm, as he sighed to welcome the future heir of its fields and the family honours.

Monsell could but counsel patience, and intimate that, according to the last account he had received, Alick and Carl Christopher-son had remained longer at Levanger than their friends anticipated, and they must not now expect them before the spring. The



Consul was quite satisfied that all was right with them, and, for the present, they must hope for a joyful meeting then. In the meantime it was satisfactory to know that his friend, Lord Thorpton, had managed to secure Alick's discharge from the Navy already, and it was even then on its way to the long-suffering seaman.

## CHAPTER XV.

### SOLD.

SQUIRE BARON every day became more anxious to meet with Willy Greenhalgh. He judged that there might be much less danger in meeting with him, if he managed it in a nice friendly way, than in the perilous work which, with a look of fiendish laughter, Ned Lodge was now always sending him to do; and he began to think it might be immensely more profitable than that little pension which Ned kept dangling before his eyes, and, perhaps, meant to be absorbed in a large one for himself. Oh, that will! If he could only get hold of that he might have a treasure in reserve which would be a constant source of comfort against a rainy day, and a very sure refuge whether days were rainy or fine. It never seemed to occur to him that it would be far better to get hold of the will maker than the will; or, if it did, a foreboding something, or a clear sense that his personal

worth was accurately estimated by Gauthorpe, forbade him to present his bloated and blustering person at Manor Farm. He feared the dog, he feared even old Margery, he feared old Hough, and he feared Gauthorpe.

The place was a volume of bugbears to him, and he did not want to meet them at present at close quarters. His brother was dead, that was one comfort; his half-cousin had made a will with his name in it, that was another comfort; and the third comfort was that, according to Ned, a great judge of human nature, he was not likely to make a new will, hunting out some thirty-second cousin, in some village cottage or some town sky parlour, or leaving his money to endow a college or befriend a dog or cat. No; everything told him that he must not rest until he met with Willy, and learn what he could tell him of the whole business.

Accordingly, no sooner did he learn that he was not wanted at the Lancaster Assizes than he suggested to Ned that he would like to go back and finish his work in Cumberland.

Ned approved, gave him two months' leave with a gracious acquiescence, and even a little money—a thing which Ned by no means dealt out liberally. Visions of future competence, with just enough to keep body and soul together, was his style of retaining his minions about him, and very successfully he made it act with them.

Squire wandered about Borrowdale, found himself in Wastdale in the winter, worked back to Buttermere, and all apparently without result. But vague hints and little signs satisfied him that the scent was warm. At last, when neither of them expected it, they stood confronted with each other in a little glen.

Willy raised his stick to knock him down, but the pleading look of Squire, the protestations that he meant no harm to him, the declaration that he was only seeking him to gain assistance in getting what was his own, all worked on the young man, unaccustomed to the wiles of the world, shrewd as he was.

Squire managed to worm out of him all he knew about his father signing the will and being intrusted with it, and he actually got

out of him the position of the very cupboard in which it was kept at home. A vague alarm seized him when he had committed this indiscretion, and he made Squire promise solemnly that he would not attempt to obtain it—a thing which Squire promised very loudly indeed, offering to take then and there the most awful oaths to bind himself and satisfy Willy. Oaths would have come as cheap to him as any other commodity which the professional spy deals in. He tried one more feeler. Where was Willy living now? This so nearly procured him trouble on the spot that he was obliged to explain it was only personal interest in his comfort. He hoped Willy was “in luck.” He should always be glad to hear it, and so forth.

“Leuk yo here, Squire. Aw’ve letten yo larn more than yo’ve a reet to know. If ony thief iver gits into eawr house, an’ steals owt out o’ that kubert, aw’ll mak’ thee pay for’t.”

Willy led him down the narrow glen, twisted and turned him about on several roads, and did not leave him until dusk came on, in the hope of confusing him as to where he was living.

Squire did not seem suspicious, promised no one should ever learn from him where Willy was to be found, left him, and immediately made his way to the police and set them on the track, claiming his moiety of the reward from the information given. Then he posted off to Leeds to Ned's head-quarters, and arrived there penniless, just ten weeks after they had parted at Lancaster.

Ned was gone ! He had not been seen for a month. Ward had been wanting him, and people told him that the little man seemed almost beside himself with rage and disappointment when he learnt that Lodge had disappeared. Squire was little better. He sat down and wept like a child.

"Cursed be he that defraudeth his brother in any matter," Squire ejaculated, with a becoming sense of the sinfulness of sin—when it was against himself.

"What, Squire, crying like a shild ! Come wid me. Come wid me."

It was an old dirty Jew, stooping as if he had lived by gathering lost needles from the ground, with whom Squire's professional avocations had brought him into a certain kind of intimacy.

Squire went with him into the little dirty hole he called home, not far off. The spy wanted to raise money ; the friend of thieves advanced it on conditions of his own. Squire pleaded the wages due to him from Ned. Would he lend him two or three guineas until Lodge returned ?

The little man, with a rat-like look—huddling himself into a kind of ball as he peered from that cunning face, where the grey hairs made the thick dirt seem more black—merely shook his head, and said—

“ No good.”

It was a heavy blow to Squire, for the old man was very likely indeed to know the truth.

Old Levi told him that nobody knew where Ned had gone. His own opinion was that he had been abroad for some weeks, and would not be back for some years.

“ He’s gotten aw my wages,” exclaimed Squire, striking his hand on his knees as he sat in great trouble. Then he bethought himself of his testamentary prospects, but, when he had made them out as glowing as he possibly could, he found that Israel was not

“a draw.” In fact, he felt that the little man did not believe one word he said.

One wonders if he thought that it was a moment when habitual wickedness was punishing habitual wickedness, by simply treating it in its sorest straight as what it was.

Once he thought he should melt the old man by proposing “a crack” of the house ; but Squire could not hide from Levi the fact that it was only a mechanic’s cottage, and this was small game to go so far afoot to find, otherwise the old man would have reciprocated Squire’s wishes, always supposing that some cracksman he could trust undertook “the job.”

Squire left him with a heavy heart, and wandered up and down the streets with a hungry stomach, and finally fell asleep on a doorstep, in an entry, through very weariness, on that keen January night.



## CHAPTER XVI.

“THE WORM I’ TH’ BUD.”

THERE was sorrow at Chadwick Fold. At the Meller’s things were in a gloomy condition. The ruddy, winter apple cheeks of the old man began to appear as if the colouring matter had had a background of sallow tints infused. The mother was seen often in tears, for unfavourable hints and stories had floated up from Manchester into the secluded hamlet, and they now knew that Arthur had entered upon a course that was contrary to every principle in which he had been bred. They were stout Church and King people, these Mellers, and it was a hard thing for them to learn that he was becoming a rebel and a conspirator, for such alone they could think one who had joined in those movements, the natural outcome of which had been brought so lately to their own doors.

They had sent him loving messages and expostulations. The latter he had treated as

small libels, and the former he had responded to in the tone of the miserable and depressed.

They had but one consolation as regarded him. He was not yet arrested for his attack on Chetwynd; but it embittered them to feel that while he was escaping on the one side he was getting caught on the other.

Maggie, who was so very cock-a-whoop some little while ago, was now in one of her ill moods, giving her tempers to everyone on the slightest occasion, and bearing none of the burdens of the common sorrow, but rather doing her part, by bad humour, by hysterical moods, by acid words, and by a queer contrariety—a sickly gaiety when others were in the deepest gloom, and a sullen, worldless, childish petulance, when there seemed to be for a moment a lightening in the general darkness of the household—to bind the fetters of distress deeper on the family heart. She appeared out of sorts now with her dressy friend, Jenny Heron, who seemed to have no objections to share Maggie's secrets, but had no inclination to offer her a partnership in her own.

But if it might be vexing to watch Maggie growing in temper and complexion like one who was drifting into a bad liver complaint, it was heartrending to witness the ravages of grief upon her nobler sister Mary. The girl was sadly changed from that day when she wandered over Stretton Moor with Alf and looked out on the wide, stretching landscape in a summer mood. She moved about the house with a weary gait, that made her mother shake her head when unobserved, and shed her tears over it more copiously than over anything else. Tired, heavy langour, as if time had pulsed fluid lead through her veins instead of the warm young generous blood; a movement of hand and foot that seemed weighted with invisible loads, but, withal, none of Maggie's splenetic words and waspish tempers; a pained smile which greeted every kindly look or word; a willingness to render to others any little office in her power, as if in undertone to all was heard like a regular refrain, the plaintive protest from her manner: "Let me do it while I may;"—this, with her gentle, subdued demeanour, was the

everyday aspect now under which she was seen. And this was what her mother liked least, while Maggie, on her part, seemed destitute of head and heart to perceive it.

"Go out, lass. It's a fine day. It'll do thee good,"

But Mary never went. No more going out without some protector and witness at her side whom she could trust in both capacities. There was only one who could be such to her, and he judged her conduct, or rather her misfortunes, more cruelly than all others.

No, until he came, and by his presence there made reparation for upset thoughts and unkind actions, she would remain within the only shelter, her father's house, that could screen her from the shadows of dishonour which had come down so wickedly and unfortunately upon her. There she would remain, looking onward to that "narrow house and dark" which could alone hide her griefs, and justify her womanhood by the reflex of womanly martyrdom coming back from the broken-hearted maiden's grave. It was not a hard thought to her now, that early termination of all her bright, girlish

hopes. It was a resting place to one who was always weary, and had given up all hopes of other rest.

"Thank you, Mrs. Digby, but I cannot go out now; I am too tired. I would rather stay indoors and take what rest I can here."

"But, my child,"—it was her gentle way of showing concern and interest to one but a few years younger than herself—"you will rest the better for a little change and fresh air. Mr. Evans has put his carriage at my disposal to-morrow, if it is fine. Let me come round and take you out with me."

No; she could not go. It was very kind, but she would be much trouble; she might faint and distress all about her.

"Do goo, Mary," expostulated her mother, feeling what a lesson it would be to all outsiders as to what was thought about her daughter's character when Mrs. Digby took her with her.

But the girl had not energy even to entertain the thought. The combative quality, if any had existed there, had died out in the presence of a foregone conclusion—the silent and certain end.

"I'll tell you what Monsell, the time has come for you to act in this matter. I was willing enough to do a woman's work when you thought I could speak to Mary Meller better than you; but that girl will die, and you must save her."

"And how, dear?"

"You must bring that foolish young fellow to reason, and make him feel that he is Mary Meller's *murderer* by his wicked suspicions."

"Evidence, Ethel, is the best kind of thing to carry to men like Alf Swires. And what have you got to supply as an explanation of her having been seen twice with a man about town like Chetwynd?"

Mrs. Digby had none to offer except that she believed the girl innocent; given with a feminine opinion, expressed vigorously, that men were *such* stupid, suspicious creatures that they would believe anything against a poor girl, &c. And Mrs. Digby had a good cry at the thought.

"Now, Ethel," he said, throwing his arm round her waist and kissing the tears away, "this will help nothing. There are girls in

that place who can tell much about this business, and Maggie, her sister, is one of them. Butler told me, when I saw him before he left the regiment, that he was convinced that Chetwynd received private information about the girl's movements. If you can find a way to make some of them confess what they know I will go into Manchester and deal with Alfred Swires in my own way. I know enough of him to know that he will listen to reason, and I don't believe that even now he is very much happier than Mary herself, although he may not show it so much."

And, indeed, this was true. He was indignant with his family, and had sent them word that he would never enter the house again as long as his aunt was there. His father was ill; but he refused to go home, so strong was his conviction that they had all, except his sister Emma, been bent on making mischief betwixt him and the Mellers.

This was a severe punishment to them; for, much as the old man loved to treat his son as a schoolboy, he had a secret trust in him by no means lessened by late events, and

a full belief that Throstle Farm and his daughter's interests would be safe in his strong hands.

"Hang it," said the old man, petulantly one night when his sciatica was more than ordinarily painful, and Emma had come back from a useless pleading with Alf to return home, "hang it, let him ha' th' lass. Hoo's bad about him."

"But he winna," said his wife.

"He'll ha' nowt noo, an' we'll aw dee, an' he'll niver come nigh us ony moer," old John groaned ; and Emma and her mother cried.

The aunt was wandering about in her room, "flighty," for it was near full moon.

"Then hoo mun goo," said the old man, doggedly.

"Hoo's gooing as fast as time can tak her," exclaimed Emma, beginning to sob.

"Gooing. Who's gooing?"

"Why, Mary Meller, hoos deeing."

"No, for sure. You dunno, say so, Emma. Dunno say that."

"Its trew, fayther. And yo shudna say hoo mun goo. Its crewel."

"It's yer aunt mun goo to th' sylum, or



onywheer else. Hoo shanna stay another day at Throstle Farm."

A look of pleasure flitted across the faces of the women, but they clouded almost immediately. They remembered that something else was now necessary. He must be right with Mary Meller before he returned, and it was gall and wormwood to the parents to remember how gladly they had helped to put things wrong by spreading the evil words which others had invented.

The old man leaned back, overcome with remorse, and the women looked on absorbed in their own melancholy thoughts. It was a silent scene, and Emma did not know whether the loud ticking of the clock or the beating of her heart was the greater sound. At last the old man roused up.

"The Curate mun put it reet. He con do owt."

"He says he con do nowt," replied Emma, forgetting herself in her despair.

"Then thou's been theer, eh, lass?"

And John looked keenly at her, but not half so unkindly as he would have done the night before.

Nor was it all peace in Andrew Heron’s home. It had always been a grief to him that he could produce no religious impression upon his sister Jenny. She was never under conviction of sin. No pleadings, no prayers, no arguments could do that, while two inches of bright coloured ribbon would put her instantaneously under conviction of finery. It would send her to her little looking-glass trying its effect on her hair, her throat, her wrists, and up and down her gown. Jenny had always been thus. She was now more vain, more loving of show and ostentation than ever since those soldiers came into the village.

Andrew had strange, uneasy suspicions about her. His mother was becoming very infirm, and, just at the moment when Jenny needed it most, the motherly voice was growing weak, and her moral force *nil*. Andrew felt that he could not supply her place, first, because it was woman’s work ; and, secondly, because the girl had never taken to him.

His two elder sisters were not so frivolous as Jenny, but they had no influence with her. It was no use his talking to her. If he told her we were but dust and ashes, Jenny would

look at the glass and laugh and say she was not. If he told her that all our righteousness was as filthy rags, she would instance pious female friends of his who were really no better, but she would tell him hers was as good as any new gown going. If he reminded her we must all die, she would laugh and remind him that a living donkey was better than a dead lion, and she was better than the donkey.

Tom got on better with her. Much more sober and solid than herself, he did not "vex her with religion." Besides Tom's eyes were clearer in some carnal things than Andrew's, and he could see that Jenny, in spite of all her brave show, had never been quite at her ease since Arthur Meller and Lieutenant Chetwynd met. More than once Tom had pressed her to tell him all, but she had refused. There were things she had no inclination to share with Tom, yet she really wanted to tell him this one thing, but the time, in her opinion, had not become ripe for it yet.

Tom knew the growing sorrow at Throstle Farm, and had his own hopes in that direction, and he believed that that one something,

which made Jenny restless at times and far more clinging to himself than usual, would clear the ground for a better understanding when it was known. She professed to feel for Mary Meller, and the thought of Mary's death filled her with awe, a sense of a possible something to herself, which all Andrew's public preachings and private admonitions had never raised in the slightest degree.

Mary dying, deserted by her lover, this was a possibility which might be any girl's. Jenny might not have much heart, but she had quite vanity enough to make her understand such a fate. Were no dim motionings to her spirit found therein of a future nearing every hour? Yes, she began to pity Mary very much, and to tell Tom something. Still she would give him no full satisfaction when he demanded who was the red coat that she had been seen with in the wood? They quarrelled for a few days, but again the old clinging manner came on, the inquiring gaze, the pleading look in her eyes, which made Tom often ask himself, "What's up wi' th' lass?" But no answer was vouchsafed by his sagacity to the question.

At last on that very night when there was such a trouble at Alf Swires' house she drew him aside and told him that one secret, bidding him go next day and tell Emma Swires what she had confessed.

In the meantime a personage of some importance had appeared in the village a few days before. Jim Smith had come back from sea, and appeared to have a little money to spend. He said his ship had been paid off. He did not seem very much afraid of being arrested, and he seemed very anxious to get rid of his loose cash at the Weaver's Arms, the village tavern, where its choicest politicians, singers, and conversationalists met. He had marvellous things to relate, and was particularly edifying in describing the death of Alick Baron, the wonderful things he had done to save him, perilling his life ten times over in the efforts to rescue ; and how, if his sage advice had been followed, Alick would never have got into the water, and the foolish officer who went in the boat might have stood some chance of recovering the castaway—*i.e.*, if he'd taken his, Jim Smith's, opinion before his own.

These stories travelled up to old Betty and Ruth, but they received them very quietly, having been drilled by Monsell some weeks before into silence. But Joe's greatest achievement was in resuming his old relations with Maggie Meller.

Fortunately for him he found her when she was in one of her accessible moods, and feeling in any one's society a comfort she could not extract from home. The consequence was that, as he settled down near the village, they were able to see much of each other, and were soon accredited with being lovers. Jim did a stroke of business in the agitation line. If he were not with Maggie, he was sure to be either in the Weaver's Arms, or in the midst of a number of idle young fellows at the village corner, haranguing them on the evils of the country and the shame that there should be such a thing as a landed proprietor in the realm. "Let aw th' lond goo ta guvment, an' share it eawt, share an share aloike, an' any decent fellies loike uzsels. Every mon as howds lond thieves his lond fro us."

Nor was it all peace and pleasure with Alf

Swires ; he was at once angry with his parents and aunt, with Mary Meller, and with himself. He was angry with his relations, because he considered, and rightly so, that they had hailed scandal with a hearty welcome. There had been huge delight, and so hugely manifested when anything against the girl was heard, that he had been driven from home by the keen anguish of its violence. Had they realised this possibility they would doubtless have put a curb upon their malicious tongues, but they were accustomed to think of him as the chained dog in the yard, that would not leave them either because of its chain, its old habits, or its affection, or each and all together. And most of all was he angry, as we have seen, with that old sister of his father's, whose lucid moments seemed to be devoted to giving point and venom, where she hated, to the fancies which found her in the moments of her lunacy. He had enunciated his terms with regard to her, and never, while she was there, would he set foot in the home of his fathers again whatever might betide.

He was angry with Mary, and the more

and more he thought of it the less and less could he tell why. She had attracted the admiration of the soldiers in general, and one of their officers in particular; but then that, as he was compelled to confess to himself, was only because she was admirable. She had twice been seen with Chetwynd, but might she not have been unfortunate? Nay, might she not have been betrayed by some one?

Maggie was not a nice girl. Might she not, he revolted to think it so, but might she not have been indiscreet and given information unthinkingly, or, worse still, with *malice prepense*? The very fact of Arthur’s sudden anger at her cry all tended to prove that she was affronted by Chetwynd’s conduct, and likely enough surprised by his presence. Still he was angry yet with Mary, but in a much more modified form; angry when he could find no other excuse, because she had made his life miserable by giving him occasion now to be angry with himself.

Yes, he was at last angry with himself in right good earnest. He missed the gentle presence, the sweet trustful look, the beauti-



ful face, the fine graceful form. He felt this the more when he traversed these Manchester-streets and saw what it was to be a stranger amid great populations ; how "few would smile the less if he were not," how different to the little circle where he was no inconspicuous unit, not one in a crowd, but all in all to a few faithful friendly souls there. He had friends, it is true, but they were sorry substitutes for what he had left ; men who would be glad to see him to help them off with their wine, or their game at whist or billiards, or join in "a quiet pipe ;" men who pointed approvingly to him, when they thought he would only half hear, as "a plucky one," the young fellow "who did that thing at Chadwick Fold," you know, taking credit to themselves for knowing him, basking in a reflected light.

And all their praise was becoming very stale.. It brought none of the rapture which an hour's walk over the hills and moors of his native place could do, if only that some one was with him for whom he languished. And as he languished in his lonely rooms after the turmoil of business was over, and

grew more listless, whispers came that stung the listlessness into alarm.

Mary was becoming seriously ill. "She was pining away," said one. "She was far gone in a consumption," said another. "She would never see the coming summer," declared a third.

This was very rebukeful to the omniscient wisdom which he had assumed when "he saw it all," and treated the girl without a harsh word certainly—one or two might have been kindness in comparison—but with a smug sense that his penetrating intellect had unravelled the whole plot and discovered her guilt. Yes, he had said nothing, but his wordless looks of accusation where there had been such a profound trust before had out deeper than any charge. How he would like now to recall all this, and be what they were once before, she at his side looking just as she did. And yet the result of all this painful solitary musing and self-humiliation was not to send him back at once to ask for forgiveness. He would have gone if he could only have found a nice tangible excuse, but that at present was not forthcoming ;

and he felt that he should look a very great fool to go there without it.

So the days passed until early February had come in, and he was still uncertain what to do. It occurred to him that, perhaps, the easiest form of approach towards a reconciliation might be made by doing the family a service. Arthur, he had heard, was going to the bad, and, if he could do him good, the Mellers, who were very anxious about him, might forgive something in himself. He determined to see him ; and with Alf a resolution was only the vestibule to an action, and a very short one to pass through.

He found Gun Street. He found Arthur with perseverance, and he found him in a temper. The young man upbraided him with cruelty to his sister, and wanted none of his company. Alf found out quite enough from those indignant utterances to show him how thoroughly Arthur resented the breath of suspicion which he had dared, by his conduct, to breathe upon his sister. Alf went there to do a favour, but the spirit in which he was met bade him to be just

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before he posed as generous. Hence, the well-meant warnings about Arthur's dangerous companions remained unuttered, and Alf returned with that part of his mission unfulfilled.

The only successful part of it was that which was wrought into himself—a sense of the deep indignation which his conduct had produced. He left the young man in a thoughtful mood, more and more satisfied that not the patronage of forgiveness, but the reparation for wrong was his proper *rôle*. How was he to find the way ?

## CHAPTER XVII.

### CAUGHT.

OLD MORRISON had not been gushing—old age learns to get rid of that lovely and verdant appendage of youth, and not to the advantage of its amiable side—when Willy handed to him the ring. But he had not been indifferent; least of all had he been sceptical, or sneering, or sarcastic. He had been thoughtful, and that thoughtfulness had reached back with a long arm to the altar of love, whose fire had never gone out, though the ashes of the embers, like the hairs of his head, were whitening fast. And thoughtfulness gathering the flame of younger and more emotional days is apt to have underground ways of showing itself.

Old Matthew's were seen in what he did and left undone. It was clear even to his eyes that his granddaughter Esther was a changed girl since the young man came to his house. And yet he had never moved a

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finger to indicate what he wished. He left matters to drift down their own natural stream. He liked Willy. He looked like a lad that "framed" well. He seemed to have a good deal of sense, a good deal of industry, and a general handiness which made him clever at what he did know, and quick to learn what he did not. In short, he was "yable an' canny." Altogether Esther might do worse, and with a caution to his old dame just to keep an eye upon her—a caution which the girl's own maidenliness made a mere matter of form—he left the young folks to themselves.

But Willy's appearance and worth operated in another mode. It reminded him of a sister who had offended him in one way, but in no other, by claiming a right which he was now conceding unquestioned. Was it, one asks, that his early sternness had found itself foiled by a woman's faithfulness to her love, and he had been compelled to listen to a still small voice within, saying occasionally, as the years went by and he trod the lonely fells, "You would have denied to your sister the very rights you have claimed for yourself;

the right, where no lawful impediment existed and no great folly entered, to choose for herself in that one great concern which was all in all to her, and but the shadow of a shade to others. You are wrong, and must make reparation, if you would have peace." But whatever might be the line of his reasoning the result was satisfactory. He wrote to his sister with much toil and painfulness, for writing was a very great and unusual ceremony with him, giving her the first news of Willy's safe arrival in Borrowdale, a great balm to her troubled spirit, and acknowledging his own hardness, and begging for the old sisterly love in response to his reviving brotherly affection, which was a balm of no less efficacy. The twin joys came with a power that made existence almost too luscious to exist, and the old woman was almost tempted to ask, "Did any one ever have such joy and live?"

"Oh! Andrah, yo mun come in to-neet. Such news!" exclaimed Mrs. Greenhalgh, as he entered the cottage at Heydale for his little service.

"Yes, Mrs. Greenhalgh, "we'll talk about

it after we have done. I'm like a man as carries as much as he can just now."

Andrew, full of his sermon, put her off just then. Perhaps it was a mistake if he particularly wanted her to hear what he had to say; for, big with the news which she had not been permitted to present, she sat fidgeting with her load all through the service, and never heard a word. That and another thing which occurred for the first time then, and often afterwards, took captive her attention.

Moncell Digby, when the hymn was in full flow, dropped in, and became one of the little flock of worshippers. Mrs. Greenhalgh stared from Andrew to him and from him to Andrew. Old Ebenezer and his wife wondered, felt flattered, rejoiced. The young folks tittered less than usual. Their elders felt a demureness creeping over them, but it was akin to satisfaction rather than awe. But the real effect lay most upon the preacher. He had the singular good sense—in itself a proof that he possessed the true instincts of the heaven-ordained preacher—not to alter, or attempt to alter, the usual character of his



prayers, expositions, and sermon by attempted fine words, far-fetched imagery, or factitious eloquence. He simply went on as if Monsell were not there; but there crept into everything such a weight of impressiveness and emotional power, that, while none of his simple hearers could have explained the difference betwixt this evening's service and the last, all knew and felt that there was an unction in it peculiar to itself.

When the service was over, perhaps the little simple action of Monsell, when he took Andrew's hand and told him that "such prayers and such a sermon had done him good," was far more gratifying to everyone, preacher and people, than the most elaborate thanks. The Curate got an inkling of what Mrs. Greenhalgh had to tell, and judged that his best course was to call another day, and make his way to Middlewood alone. Andrew went to the house on this occasion "to rejoice with them that do rejoice."

Martha was radiant. Martha did not now attend the little service. Ever since there seemed to be an understanding betwixt her and Andrew she had stayed away. Her

pride would not let her do that which looked like "running after him;" and as the preacher entered he saw that the family had killed the fatted calf—a very plump capon—and were going to make merry with their friend by the aid of appropriate trimmings.

Old Morrison had been somewhat slow in evolving out of his moral consciousness this letter, and it was not very long after it was sent that the household of Hope Farm were thrown into great consternation. A cock crew in the middle of the night, and every sane person knew that that boded bad luck. Strange to say, their thoughts did not fly to the cows. The need fire had talisman'd them. Then who was it that had to die? Everybody thought of that one body who was particularly interesting to them, or, perhaps, pungently obnoxious. There was no more real rest that night, what with alarm, curiosity, fear, hope.

Geordie's thoughts travelled to a farm above Buttermere, and a girlish face there. Esther's to the same farmstead, and a fair-haired young man within it. When the brother and sister met at their early matin

meal each saw in the other the particular thought, and each seemed remarkably interested when Willy, breathless as a hunted hare, came in.

“What’s t’ matter?” cried Esther.

“What’s the matter wi’ Alice?” cried Geordie.

“Alice is aw reet,” Willy replied; “an’ th’ matter is aw’m hunted.”

He then explained that the police were on his track, the result of meeting accidentally with Squire Baron, he believed; that he was very hungry; that he felt sure of being taken this time, and that he came this way to have a last good look before he was caught.

This was cheerless news, but Esther and her sister put aside their own fears bravely, and got him breakfast. Perhaps more tears than one dropped as this was quickly done, but these young folks came of a brave stock, and were occasionally used to startling news, though quite of another kind.

The meal was scarcely despatched before the outlook which they had planted announced the appearance of the constables on the other side of the valley, and Geordie got

him away as quickly as he could through the little hurst at the side of the house and up into the fells.

“ Esther, yo’ll not forget me ? ” was Willy’s whispered adieu and only declaration of love, answered by a look and a blush.

“ Geordie,” cried the old man, “ ye’ll tak him up that gate,” pointing in the direction of Lodore and the Lady’s Rake, up which the poor Countess of Derwentwater escaped with the family jewels just a hundred years before.

Old Morrison thought that amid the trees, ravines and gorges thereabout they might screen themselves from pursuit until night, and then get away. But it was not to be.

“ We’ll hunt him with beagles,” the catch-polls had said, and they never lost the scent until late at night they ran Willy and his friend fairly to earth.

END OF VOL. II.





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